

IMMUNISATION
COALITION

Influenza Vaccination Amongst Children Under 5 Years

Immunisation Coalition | September 2024

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Summary of Key Findings



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Overview of Findings to the Main Questions



27% vaccinated this year

- 27% of children aged under 5 years received Influenza vaccine this year.
- Highest amongst those from:
 - ACT (45%)
 - TAS & NT (31%)
 - VIC (30%)
- Lowest amongst those from:
 - WA (22%)
 - QLD (23%)

58% recommended vaccination this year

- 58% of parents were recommended by a General Practitioner, or a Nurse Practitioner, that their child/children, aged under 5 years, be vaccinated against Influenza this year.
- Highest amongst those from higher income households:
 - \$175-199k (63%) & \$150-174k (61%)
- Conversely, lowest amongst those from lower income households:
 - \$50-74k (53%) & \$25-49k (54%)

45% aware vaccination is recommended every year

- 45% of parents aware that children, aged under 5 years, are recommended to be vaccinated against Influenza every year.
- Awareness higher amongst parents from:
 - Higher socio-economic households
 - ACT, VIC & TAS
 - Metropolitan areas
 - Parents who are married

41% aware vaccination is free

- 41% of parents aware that for children, aged under 5 years, vaccination against Influenza is free.
- This same question was asked in September 2023, to a similar sample, where 39% were aware it was free.

Recommendation by GP's & NP's main reason

- 41% of parents answered that the recommendation by a General Practitioner, or a Nurse Practitioner, was the main reason for having their child/children vaccinated this year.

Don't believe Influenza is serious

- 29% of parents don't believe Influenza is serious, which was the main reason for not vaccinating this year.
- The other main reasons for not vaccinating this year were:
 - Don't believe/not convinced vaccination protects against Influenza
 - Concerns about safety issues that may cause harm to my child
 - Became aware of negative information and decided not to vaccinate

29% exposed to misinformation

- 29% of parents have been exposed to misinformation concerning Influenza vaccination.
- The main misinformation these parents were exposed to was:
 - Influenza vaccine is not effective or has limited effectiveness
 - Children may get Influenza from having the vaccine
 - Influenza is not serious enough in young children to warrant vaccination
- Social media accounted for 47% of all misinformation.
- 36% of parents exposed to misinformation were influenced not to vaccinate their child/children against Influenza.

26% exposed to anti-vaxer sentiment

- 26% of parents have been exposed to anti-vaxer sentiment concerning Influenza vaccination.
- The main anti-vaxer sentiment these parents were exposed to was:
 - Natural for children to have Influenza & less harmful than vaccination
 - Healthy children do not need it
 - Weakens children's immune system
- Social media accounted for 45% of all anti-vaxer sentiment.
- 24% of parents exposed to anti-vaxer sentiment were influenced not to vaccinate their child/children against Influenza.

2

Methodology & Sample

5



Questions Included

17 questions, all related to Influenza vaccination of children aged under 5 years

1. Are you aware that for children, aged under 5 years, vaccination against Influenza is free?
2. Are you aware that children, aged under 5 years, are recommended to be vaccinated against Influenza every year?
3. Did your General Practitioner, or a Nurse Practitioner, recommend that you child/children, aged under 5 years, be vaccinated against Influenza this year?
4. Was your child/children, aged under 5 years, vaccinated against Influenza this year?
5. What were the main reasons for having your child/children, aged under 5 years, vaccinated against Influenza this year?
6. When was your child/children, aged under 5 years, vaccinated against Influenza this year?
7. What were your main reasons for not having your child/children, aged under 5 years, vaccinated against Influenza this year?
8. Have you been exposed to misinformation concerning Influenza vaccination for your child/children?
9. Can you describe what was the misinformation you have been exposed to?
10. What was the source of the misinformation?
11. Has this misinformation influenced your decision not to vaccinate your child/children against Influenza?
12. Have you been exposed to anti-vaxer sentiment concerning Influenza vaccination for your child/children?
13. Can you describe what was the anti-vaxer sentiment you have been exposed to?
14. What was the source of the anti-vaxer sentiment?
15. Has this anti-vaxer sentiment influenced your decision not to vaccinate your child/children against Influenza?
16. How would you rank other infectious diseases in terms of vaccination importance, against Influenza, for your child/children, aged under 5 years?
17. As a parent, were you (and your partner) vaccinated against Influenza this year?

Details of the Methodology

The methodology utilised a very large nationwide sample size, closely representative of the Australian adult population, comprising 3 stages of qualitative & quantitative research.

Stage 1: Focus Groups

- 15 focus groups were conducted, each comprising a representative sample of 10-12 Australians, each taking on average 90 minutes.
- Detailed qualitative and specific quantitative information obtained from this stage.
- Groups were held in central locations, in the following cities:
 - Sydney (2) - Brisbane (2) - Adelaide - Canberra - Newcastle - Bendigo
 - Melbourne (2) - Hobart - Perth - Darwin - Toowoomba - Bunbury

Stage 2: Telephone Survey

- 1,512 telephone interviews were conducted, predominately amongst:
 - Those aged 65+
 - Those with limited vision
 - Those who do not have Internet access or who do not use the Internet
- Detailed quantitative information was obtained from this stage.
- Each interview took on average 29 minutes to complete.

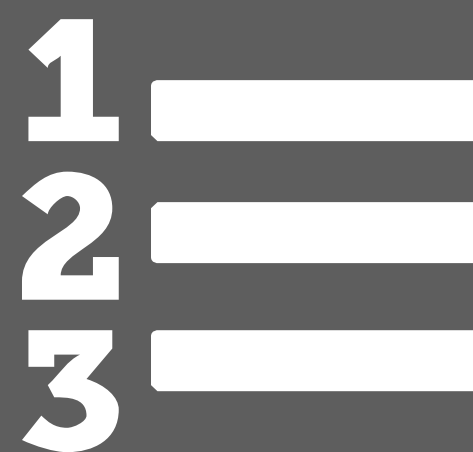
Stage 3: Online Survey

- 23,523 interviews were conducted amongst a representative sample of Australians.
- Detailed quantitative information was obtained from this stage.
- The survey utilised the latest online technology, where images, audio and video were included for some questions, making the survey interactive and engaging.
- Smartphones, tablet computers and PC's were used to undertake the survey.
- The survey took on average 27 minutes to complete.



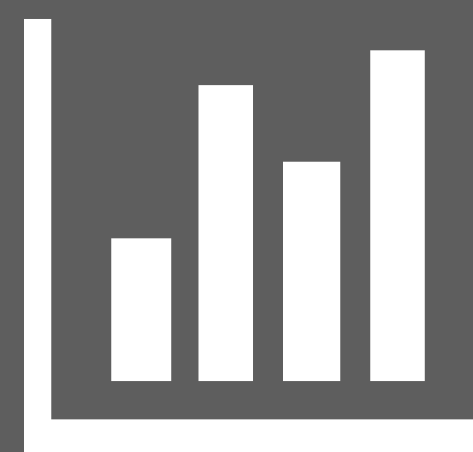
Sample

- Very large nationwide sample size, involving:
 - 171 focus group participants
 - 25,035 telephone and online survey participants
- Representative of the Australian adult population, across all States, Territories, metropolitan, regional, rural & remote areas.



Comprehensive

- 3-stage methodology.
- Qualitative stage:
 - 15 focus groups, conducted across 12 cities
- Quantitative stage:
 - 1,512 telephone surveys
 - 23,523 online surveys



Confidence

- Very high level of statistical confidence across all findings.
- Between 95-97% statistical confidence for most questions.



Dates

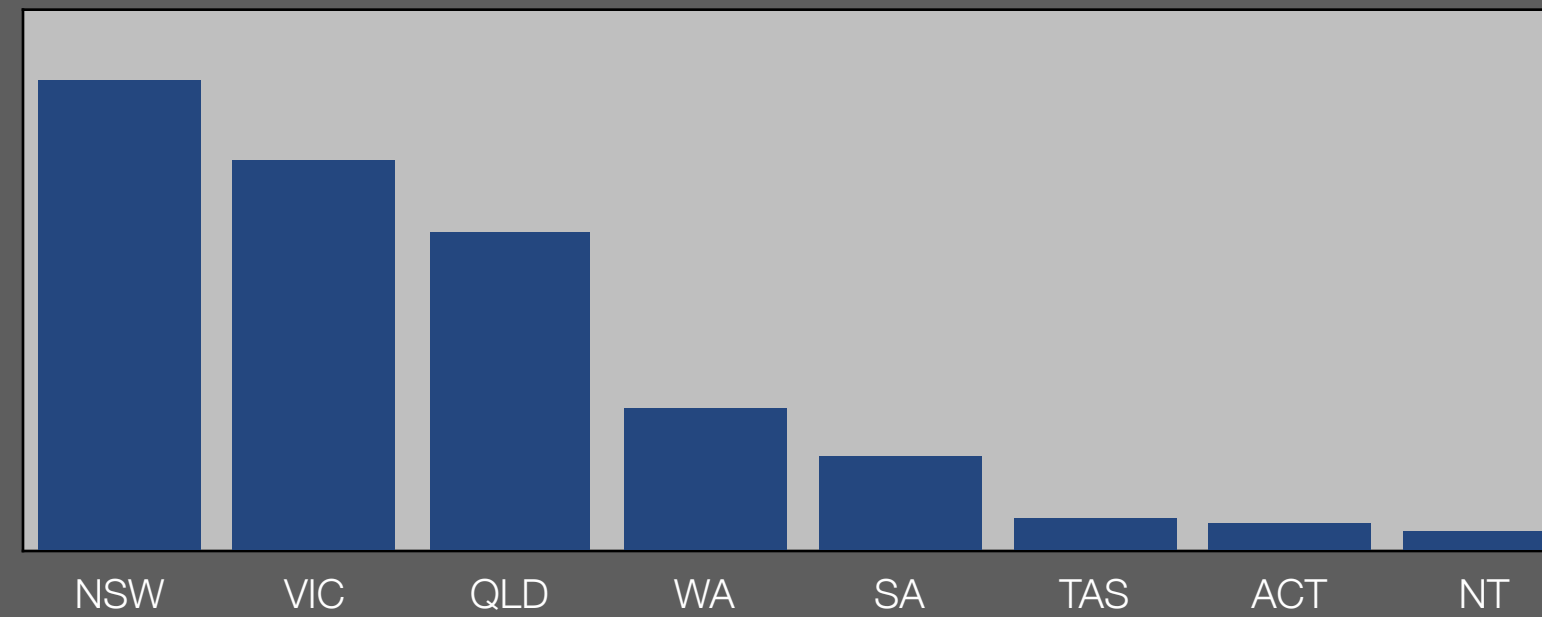
- Data collection took place over the dates:
- Qualitative stage
 - Focus groups: 26th August to 4th September
- Quantitative stage:
 - Telephone survey: 6th to 19th September
 - Online survey: 6th to 22nd September

Details of the Sample: Parents with a Child/Children aged <5 Years

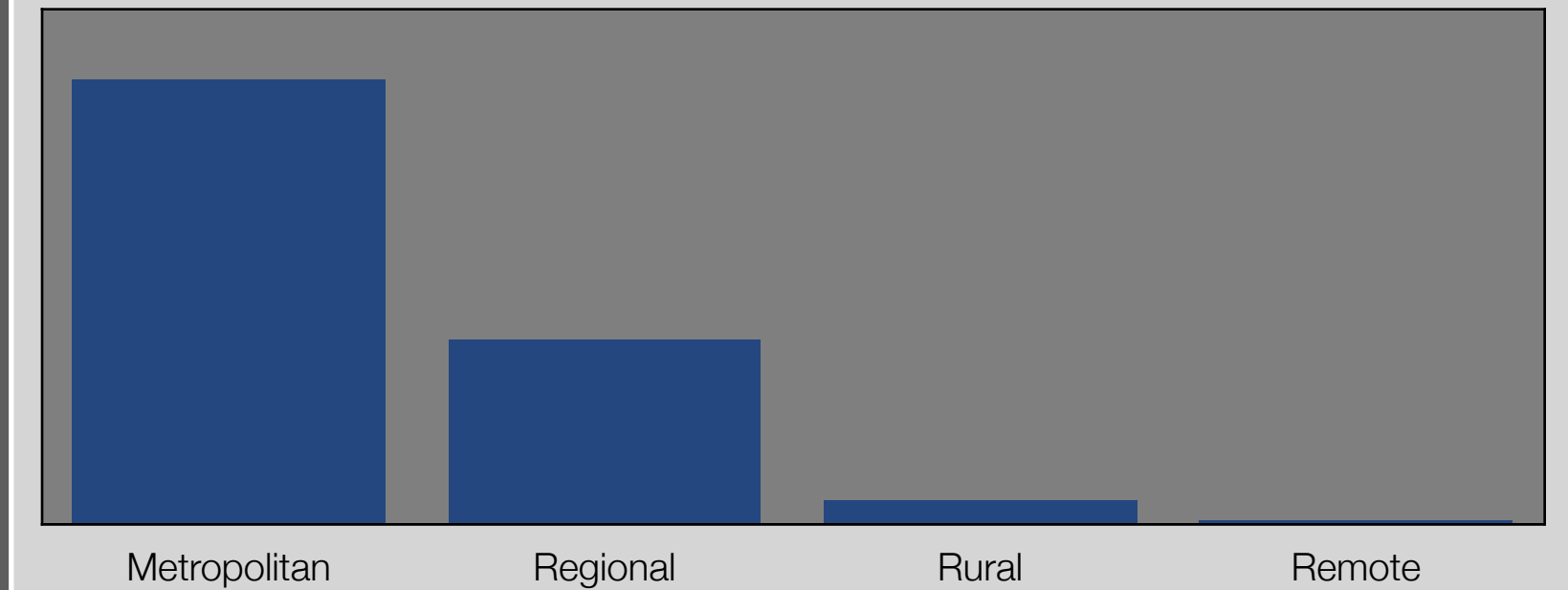
The sample was closely representative of the Australian adult population, across all major geographic, demographic & socio-economic factors.

From the overall sample (n=25,035), 4.1% (n=1,022) were a parent with a child/children aged <5 years.

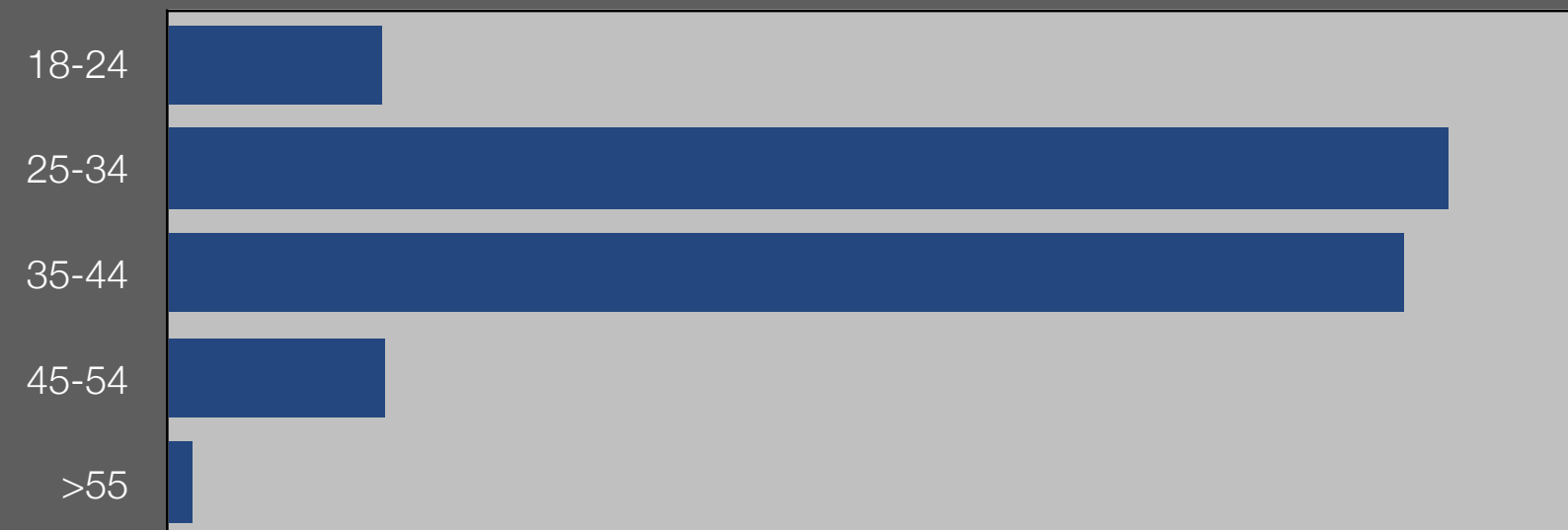
States & Territories



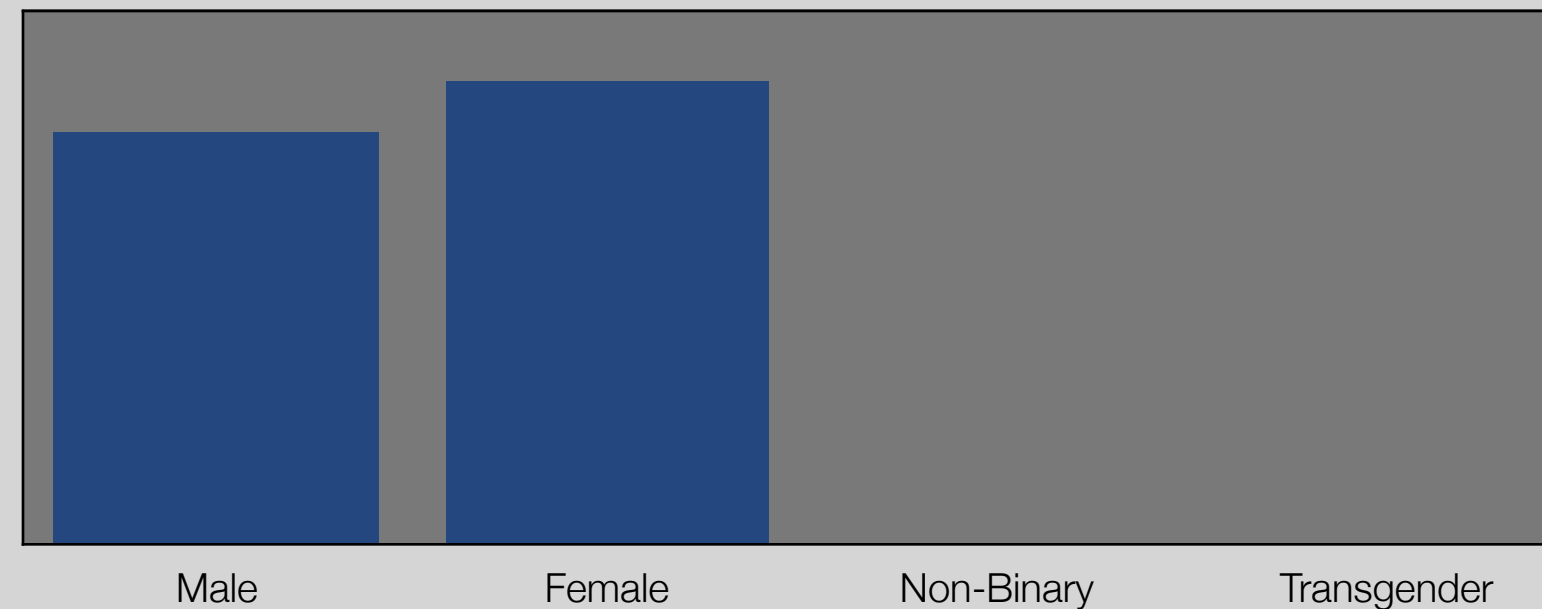
Geographic Area



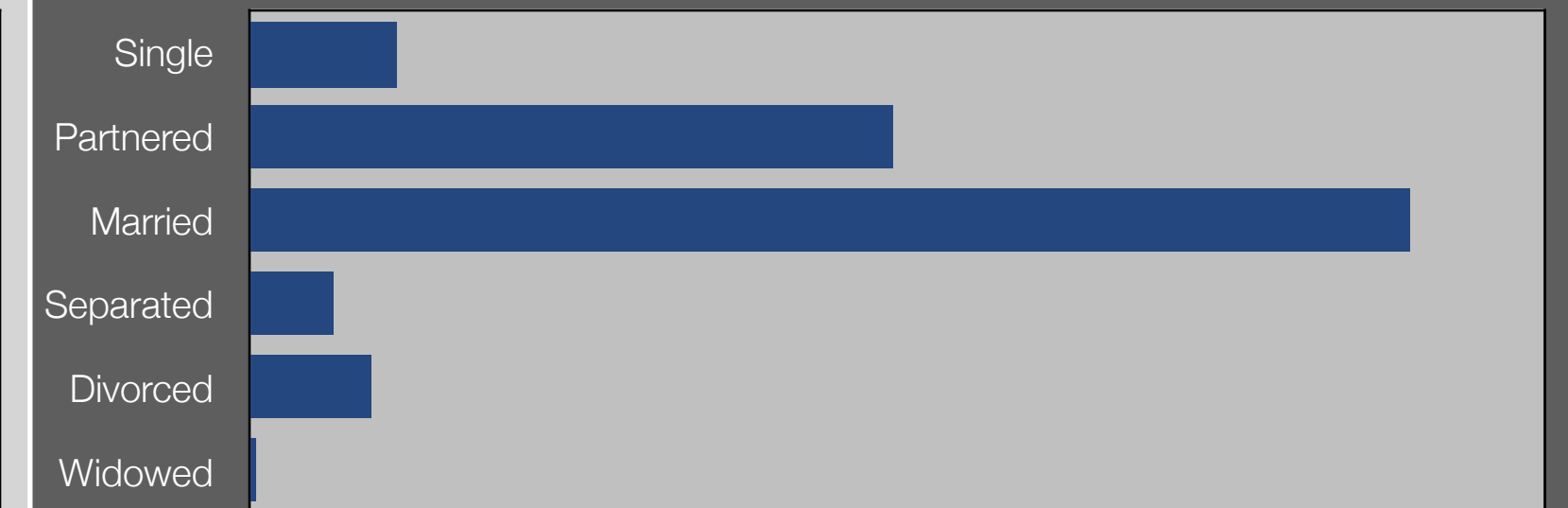
Age



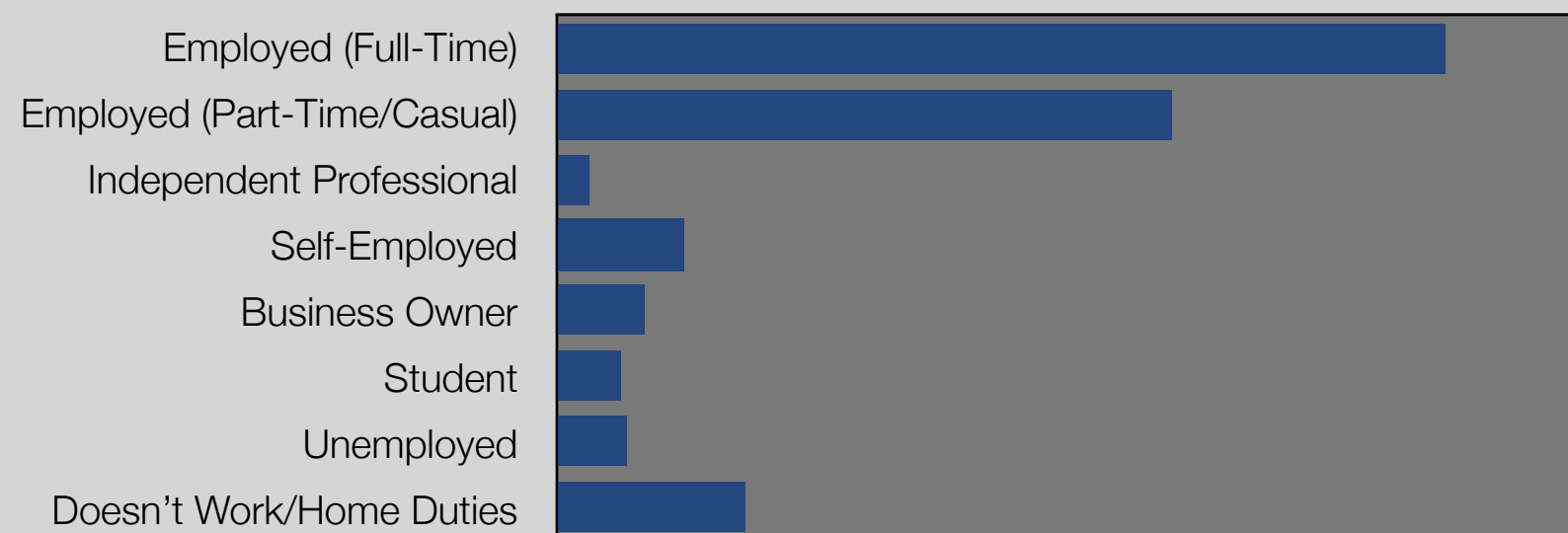
Gender



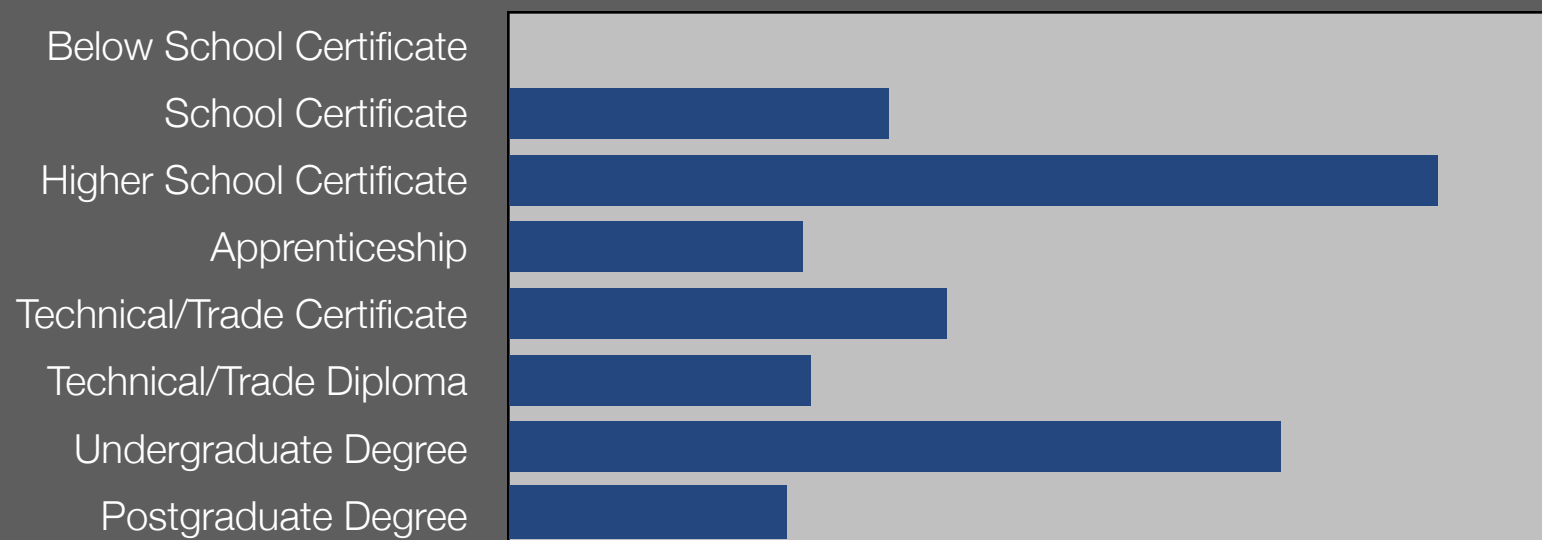
Relationship Status



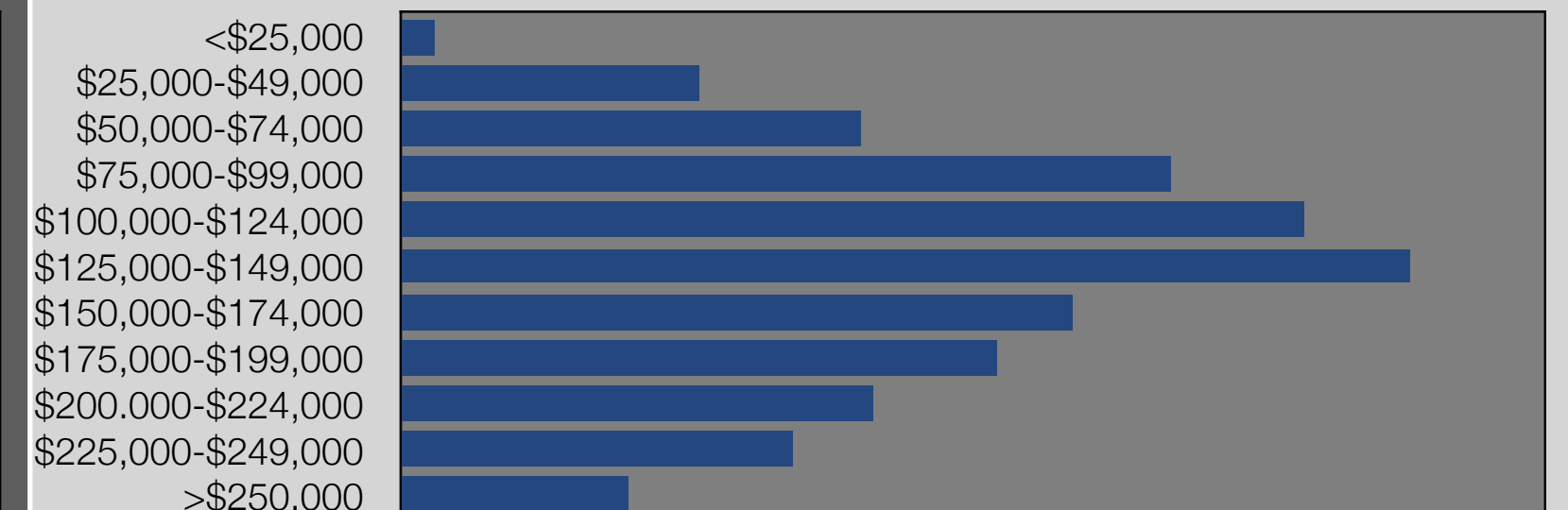
Occupation



Highest Level of Education



Household Income



3

Findings



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41% aware Influenza vaccine free for children under 5 years

1. Are you aware that for children, aged under 5 years, vaccination against Influenza is free?

41% aware Influenza vaccine free for children under 5 years

- For the question, illustrated in the opposite, top chart:
 - 41% answered 'Yes' & 59% 'No'
- This same question was asked in September 2023, to a similar sample, where 39% answered 'Yes'.

Higher awareness amongst women & those aged 35-44

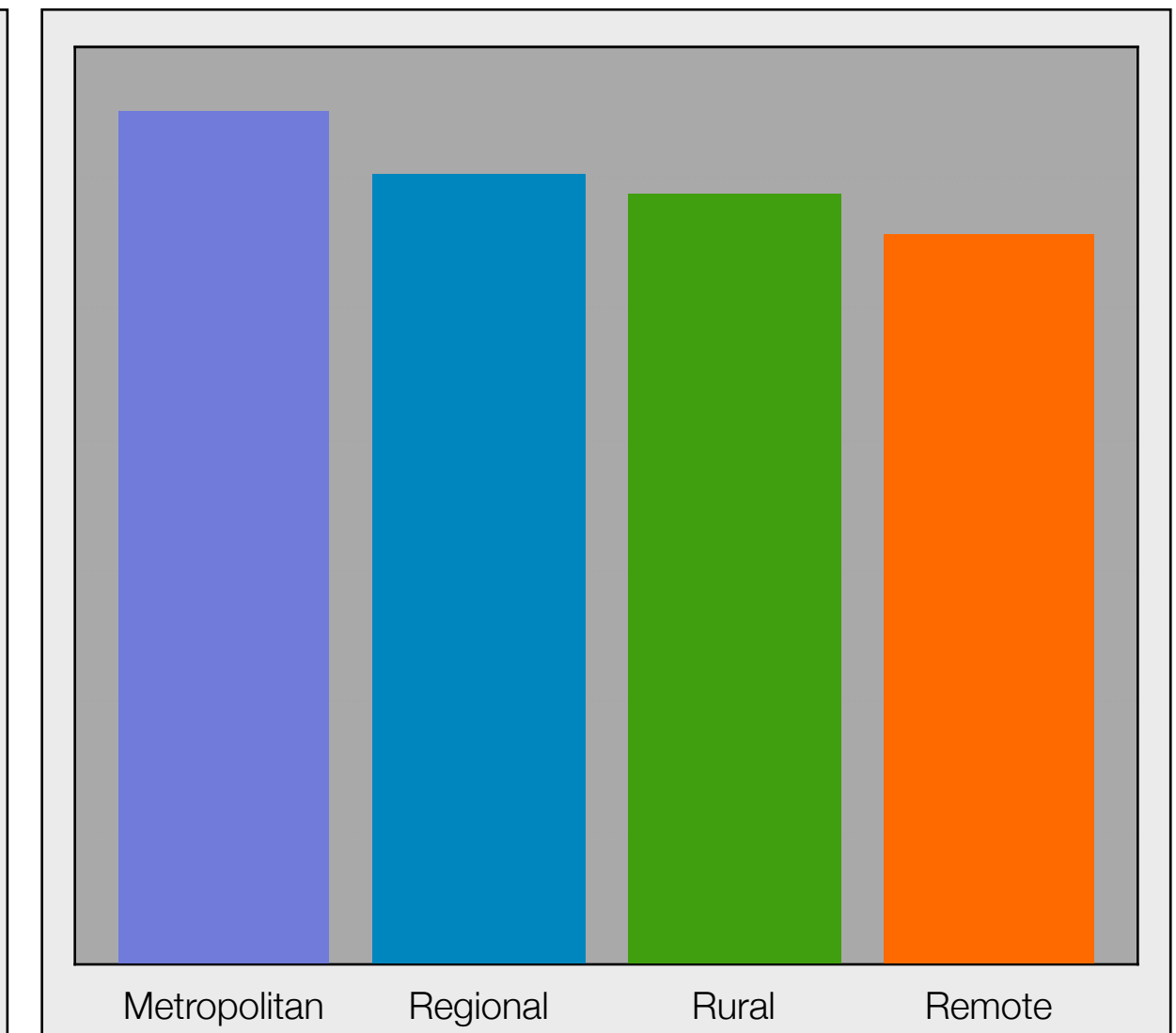
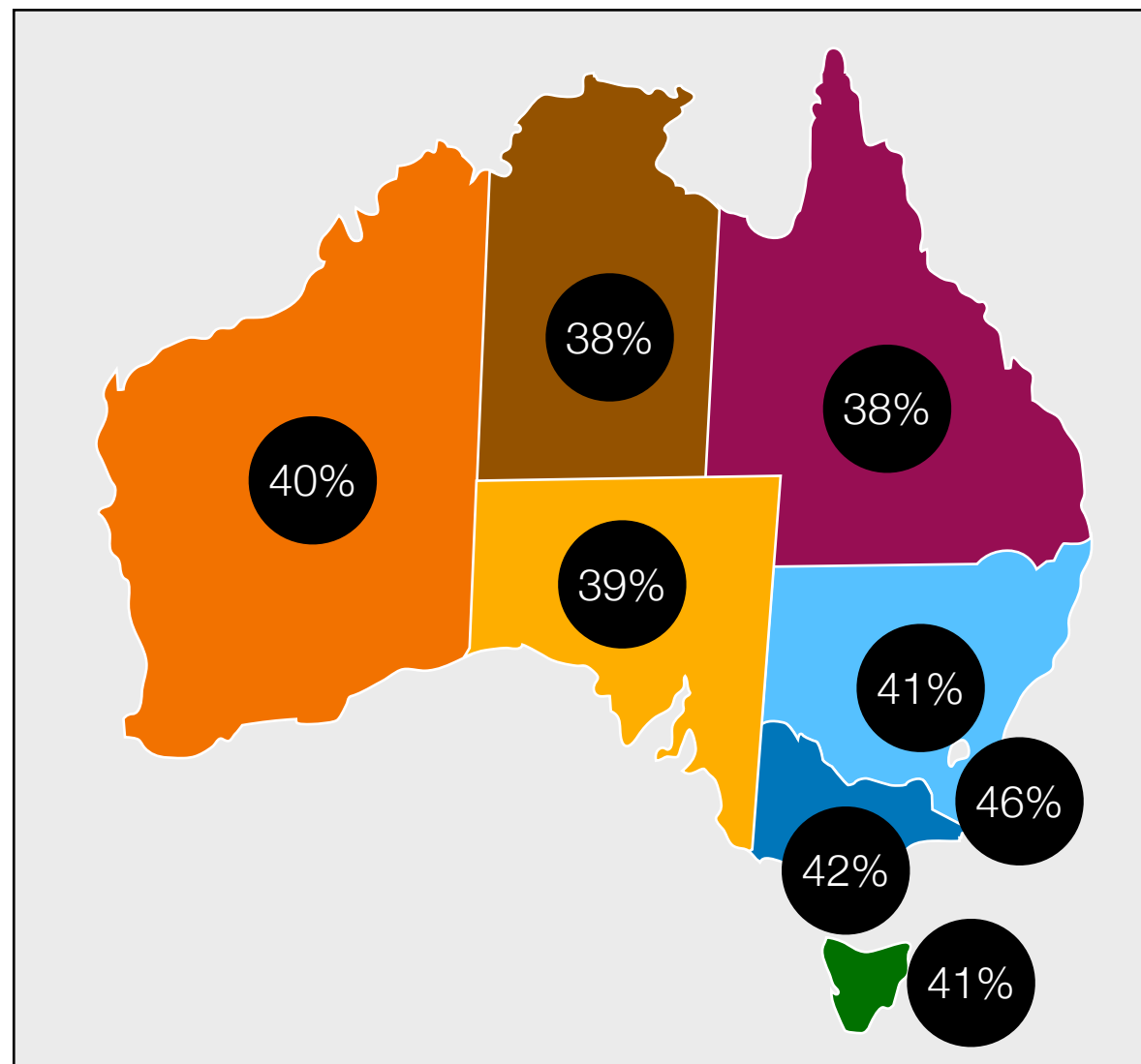
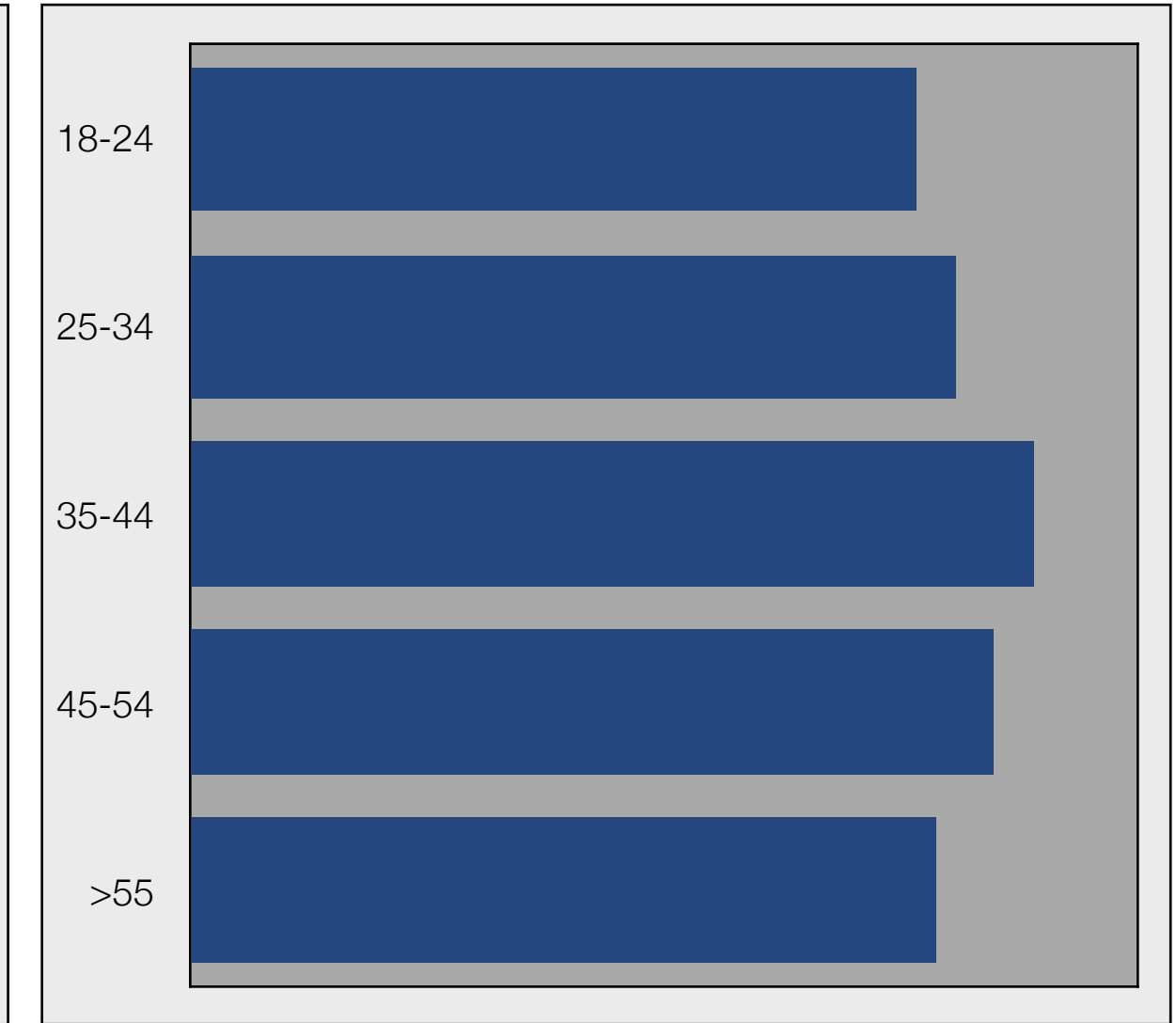
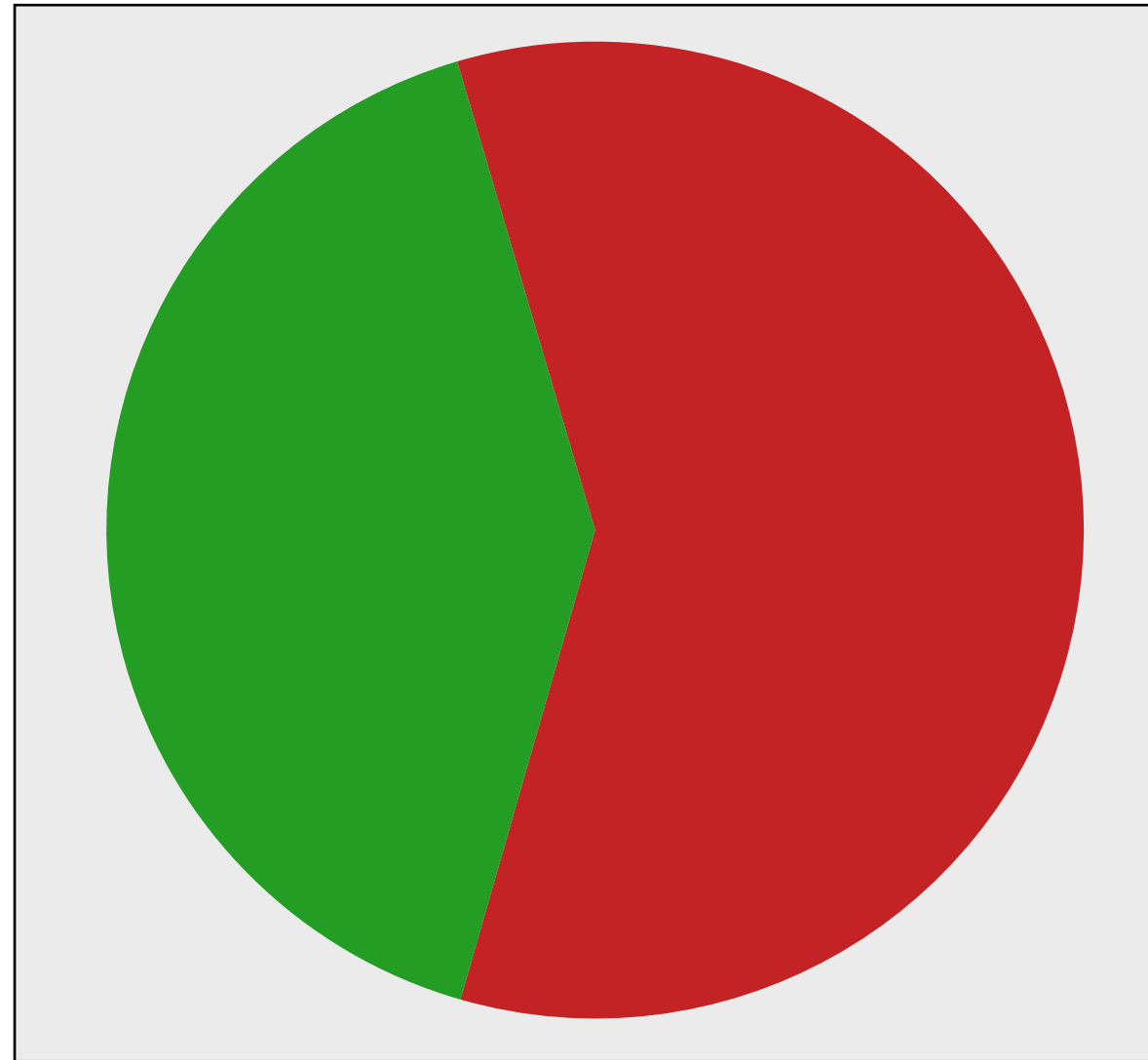
- Women had higher awareness (43%), compared to men (38%).
- Those aged 35-44 had the highest awareness (43%), with the lowest levels of awareness amongst the youngest and oldest age groups.

Highest awareness in ACT, VIC, NSW & TAS

- Across the States & Territories the highest awareness was amongst those from:
 - ACT (46%), followed by VIC (42%), NSW & TAS (41%)
 - The lowest levels of awareness were amongst QLD & NT (38%), SA (39%) & WA (40%)
- Those from metropolitan areas had the highest awareness (42%), followed by regional (39%), rural (38%) & remote (36%).

Household income an influencing factor in awareness

- Those from middle-income households had the highest level of awareness:
 - \$150-174k (45%) & \$125-149k (44%)
- Conversely, those from lower-income households had the lowest level of awareness:
 - <\$25k (35%) & \$25-49k (37%)



45% aware children <5 years recommended to be vaccinated every year

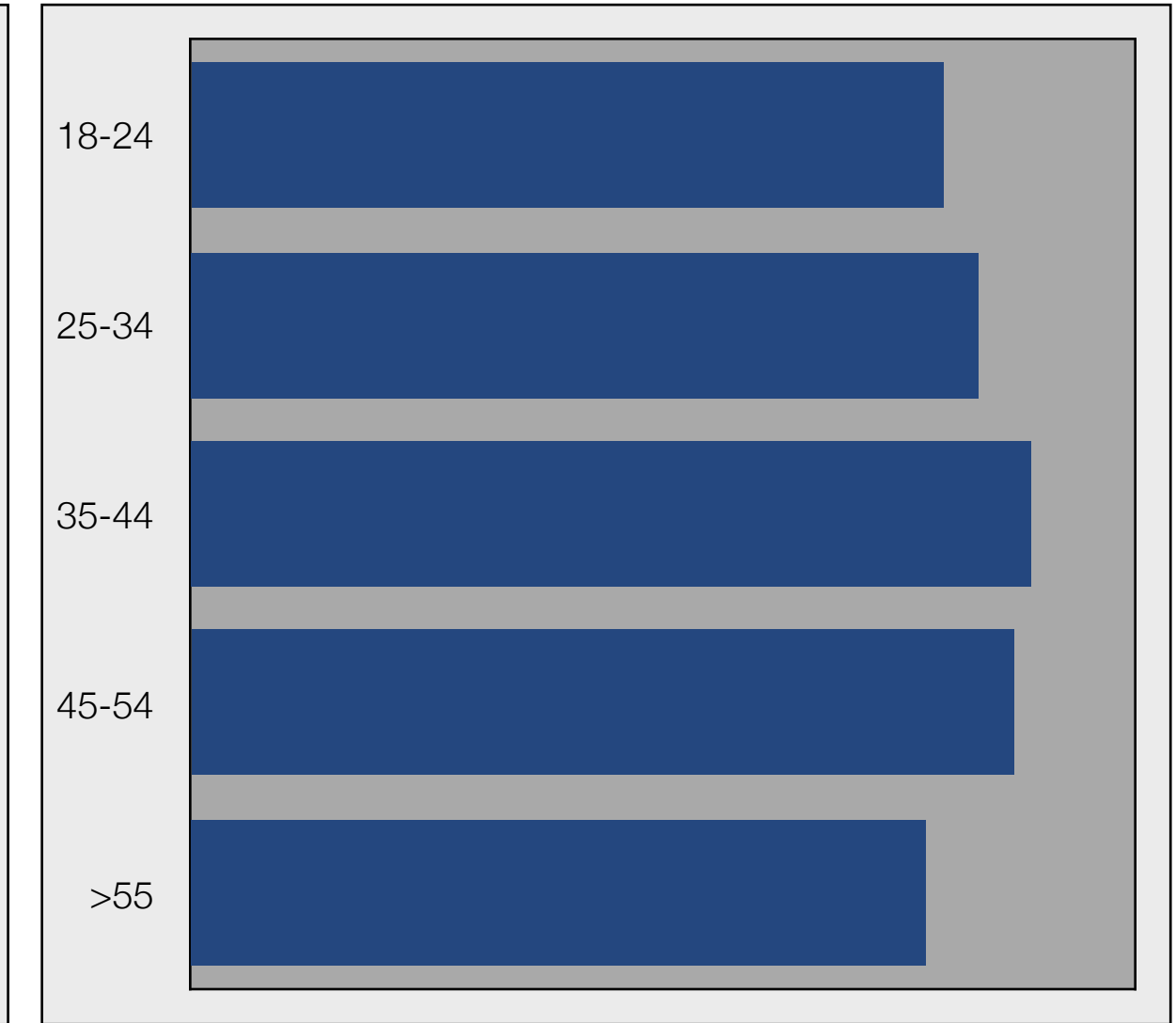
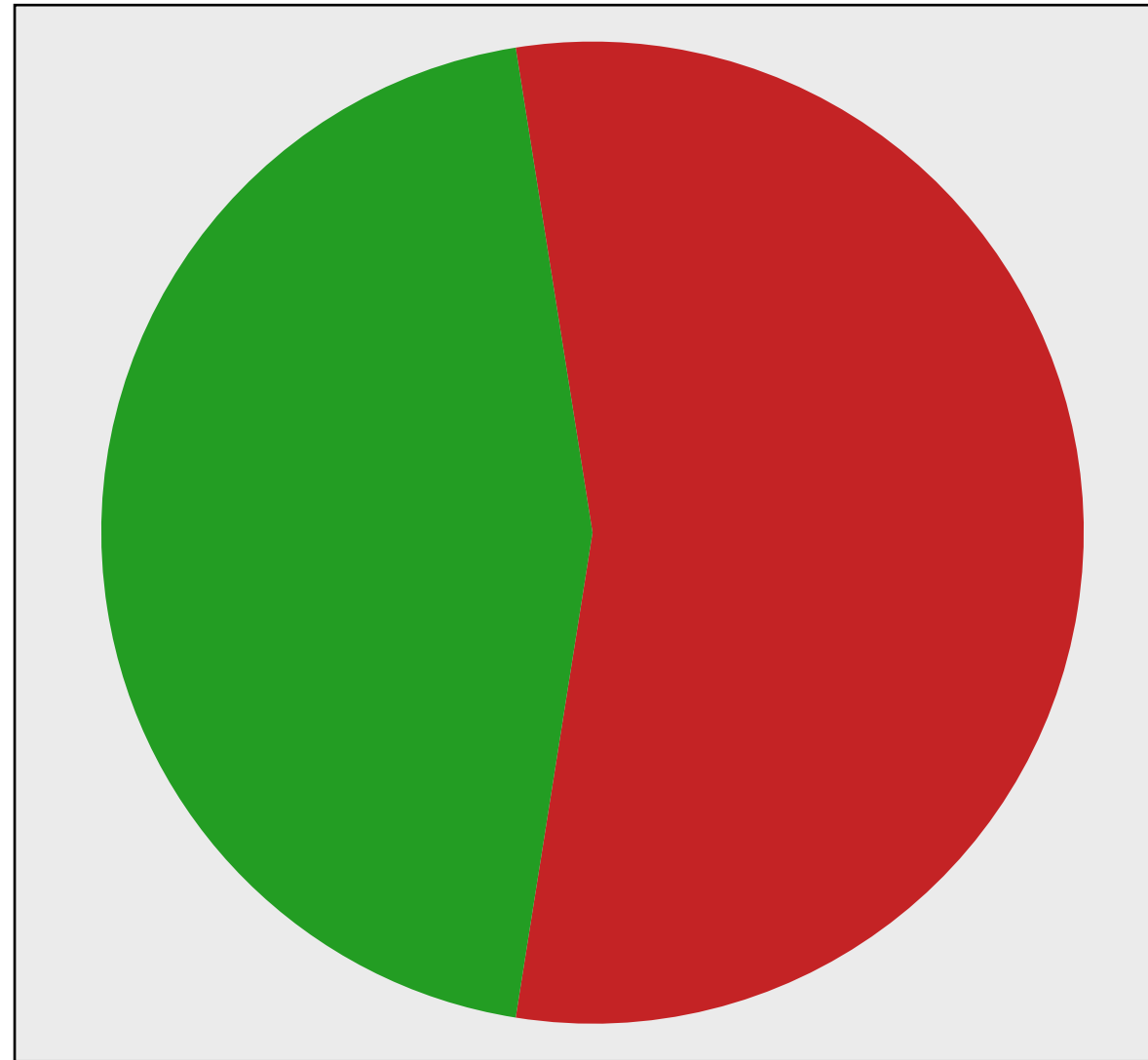
2. Are you aware that children, aged under 5 years, are recommended to be vaccinated against Influenza every year?

45% aware children <5 years recommended to be vaccinated every year

- For the question, illustrated in the opposite, top chart:
 - 45% answered 'Yes' & 55% 'No'

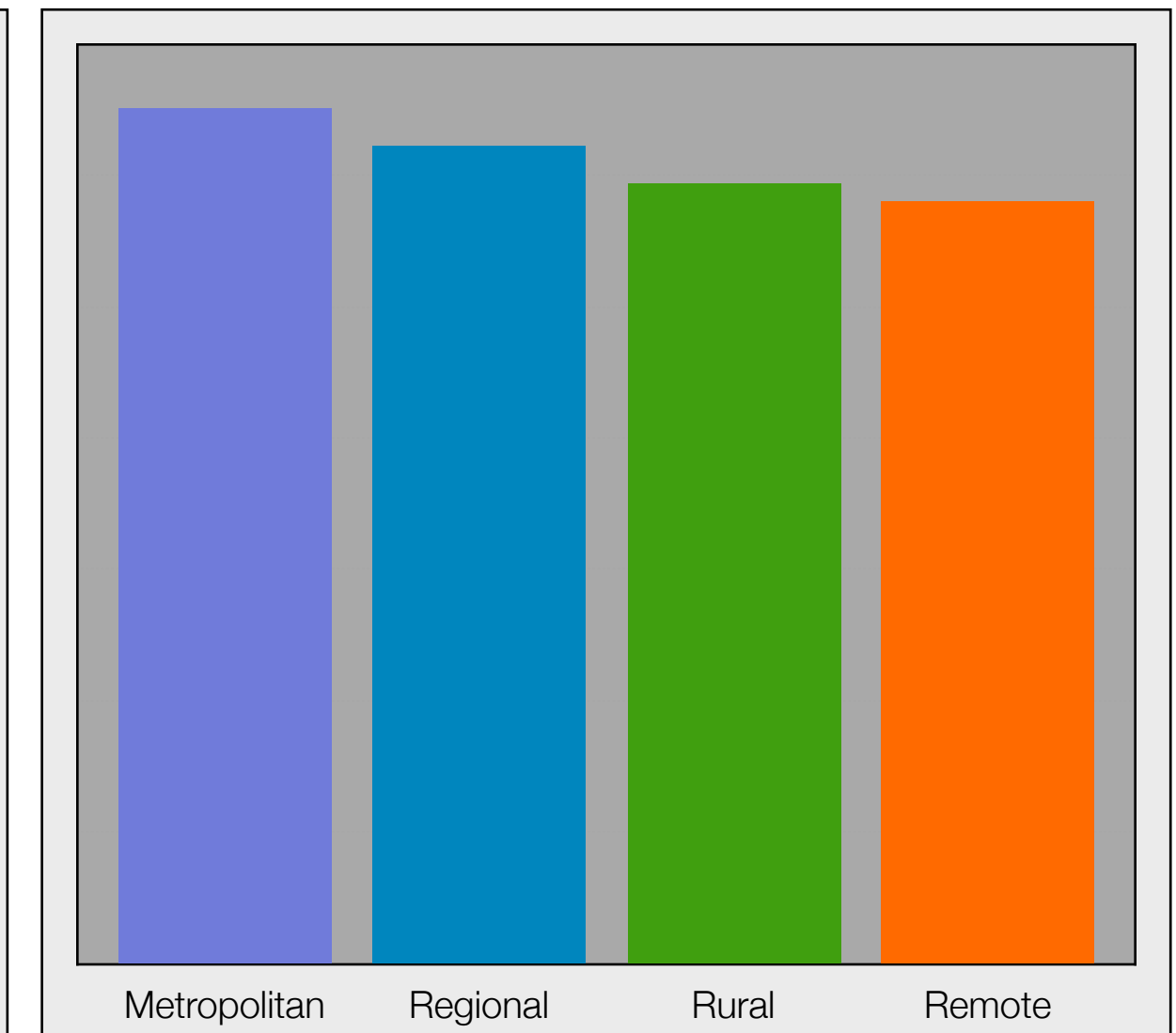
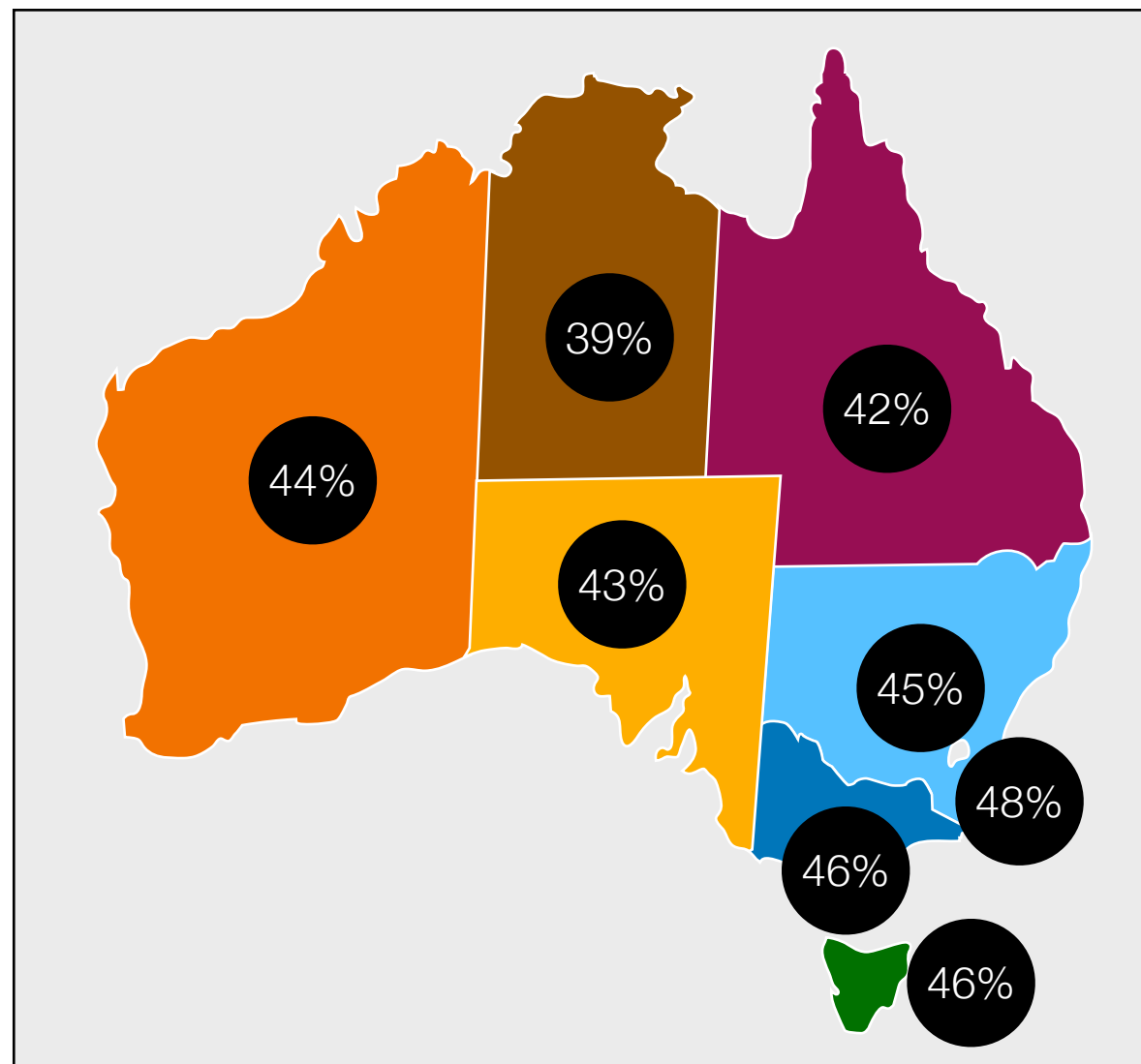
Occupation, gender & household income the main determinants

- Across the demographic, geographic & socio-economic factors, the main determinants in awareness were occupation, gender & household income, summarised in the table below.



Determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes'

Age <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slightly higher amongst parents aged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35-44 (47%) 45-54 (46%) Lowest amongst those aged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >55 (41%) 18-24 (42%) 	Gender <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher amongst women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women 47% Men 43% 	State/Territory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest amongst those from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACT (48%) VIC & TAS (46%) NSW (45%) Lowest amongst those from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NT (39%) QLD (42%) & SA (43%) 	Geographic Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slightly higher amongst those from metropolitan areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metropolitan (46%) Regional (44%) Rural (42%) Remote (41%)
Household Income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher amongst middle-higher income households: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$175-\$199k (48%) \$200-224k (47%) Lowest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$25-49k (39%) <\$25k (41%) 	Occupation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Professional (51%) Employed (Full-Time) (47%) Doesn't work/Home (47%) Employed (Part-Time/Casual) (45%) 	Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postgraduate (48%) Undergraduate (46%) Technical/Trade Dip (46%) Lower amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Certificate (40%) <School Certificate (41%) 	Relationship Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Married (47%) Partnered (45%) Lowest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single (42%) Separated (43%)



58% were recommended vaccination this year by a GP or NP

3. Did your General Practitioner, or a Nurse Practitioner, recommend that you child/children, aged under 5 years, be vaccinated against Influenza this year?

58% were recommended vaccination this year by a GP or NP

- Illustrated in the opposite, top chart, 58% answered 'Yes' & 42% 'No'

Higher amongst women & those aged 45-54

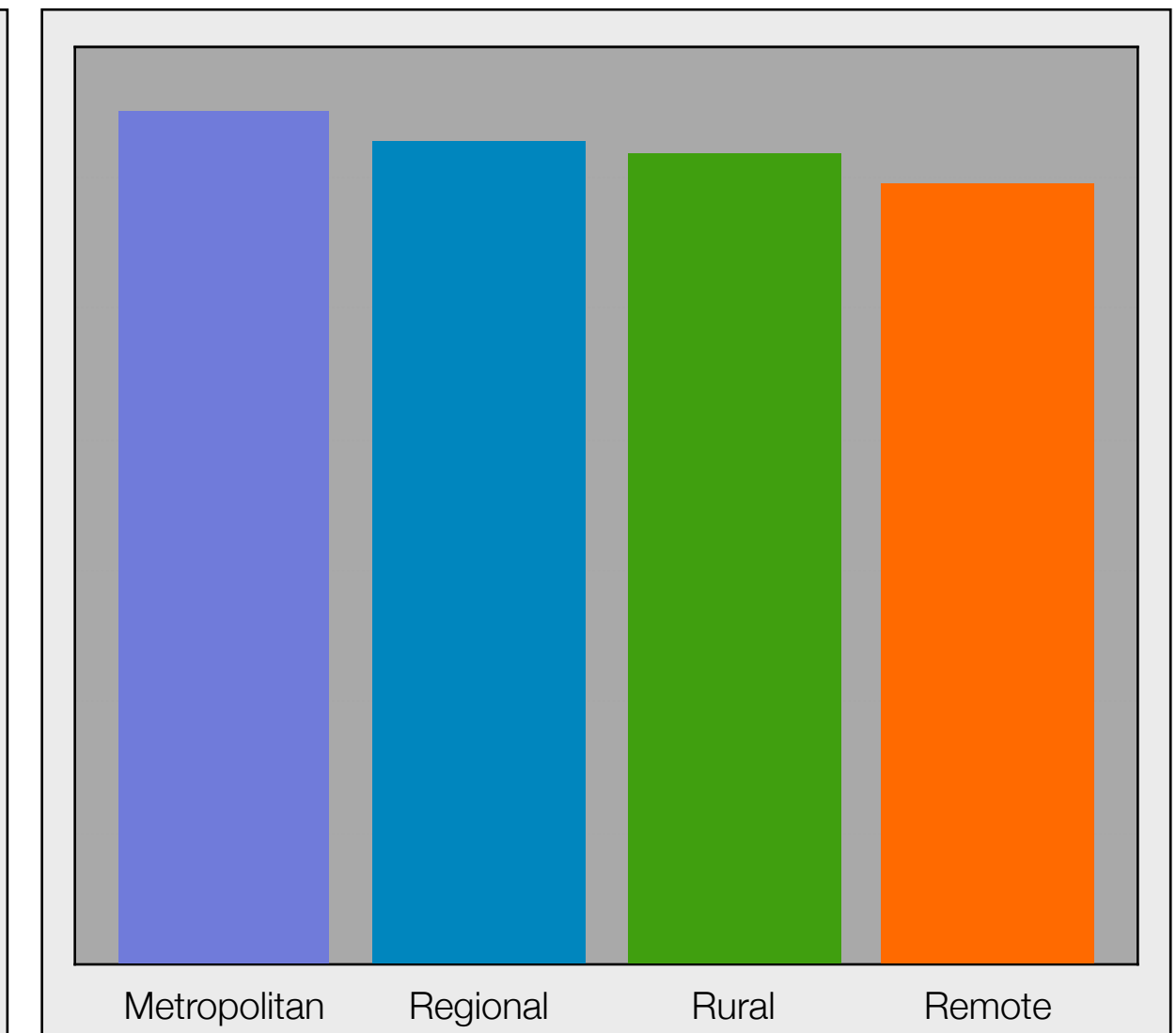
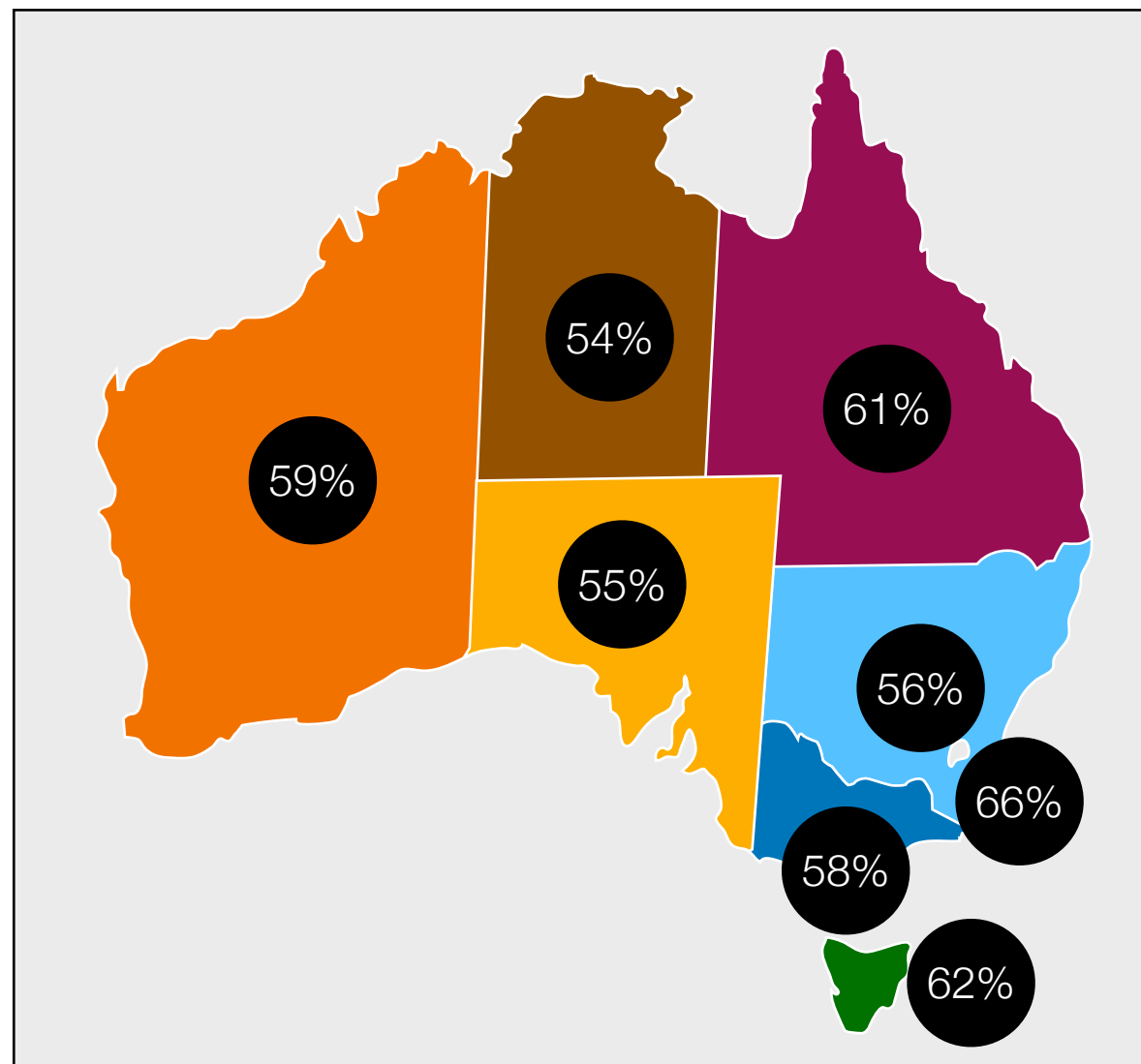
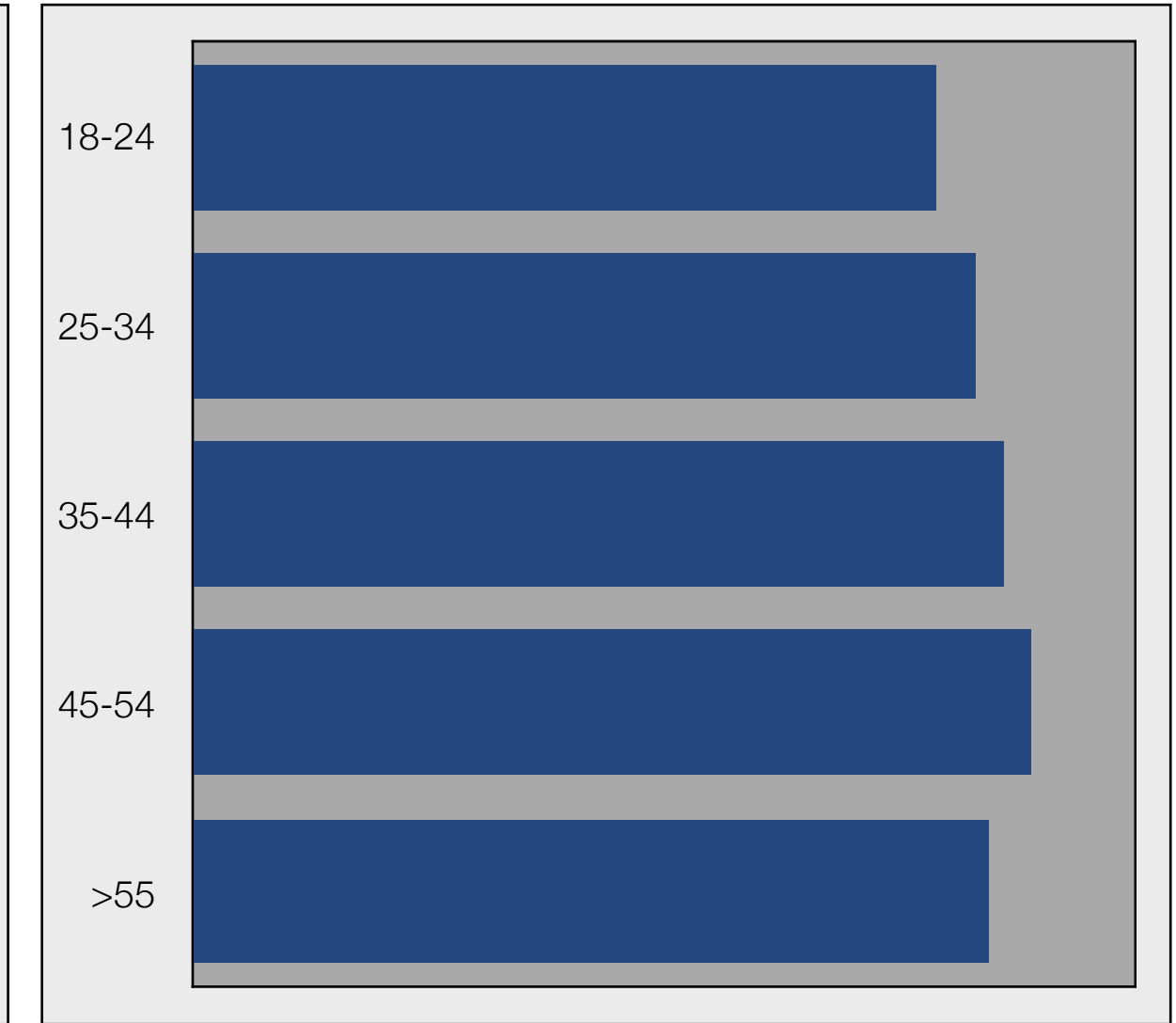
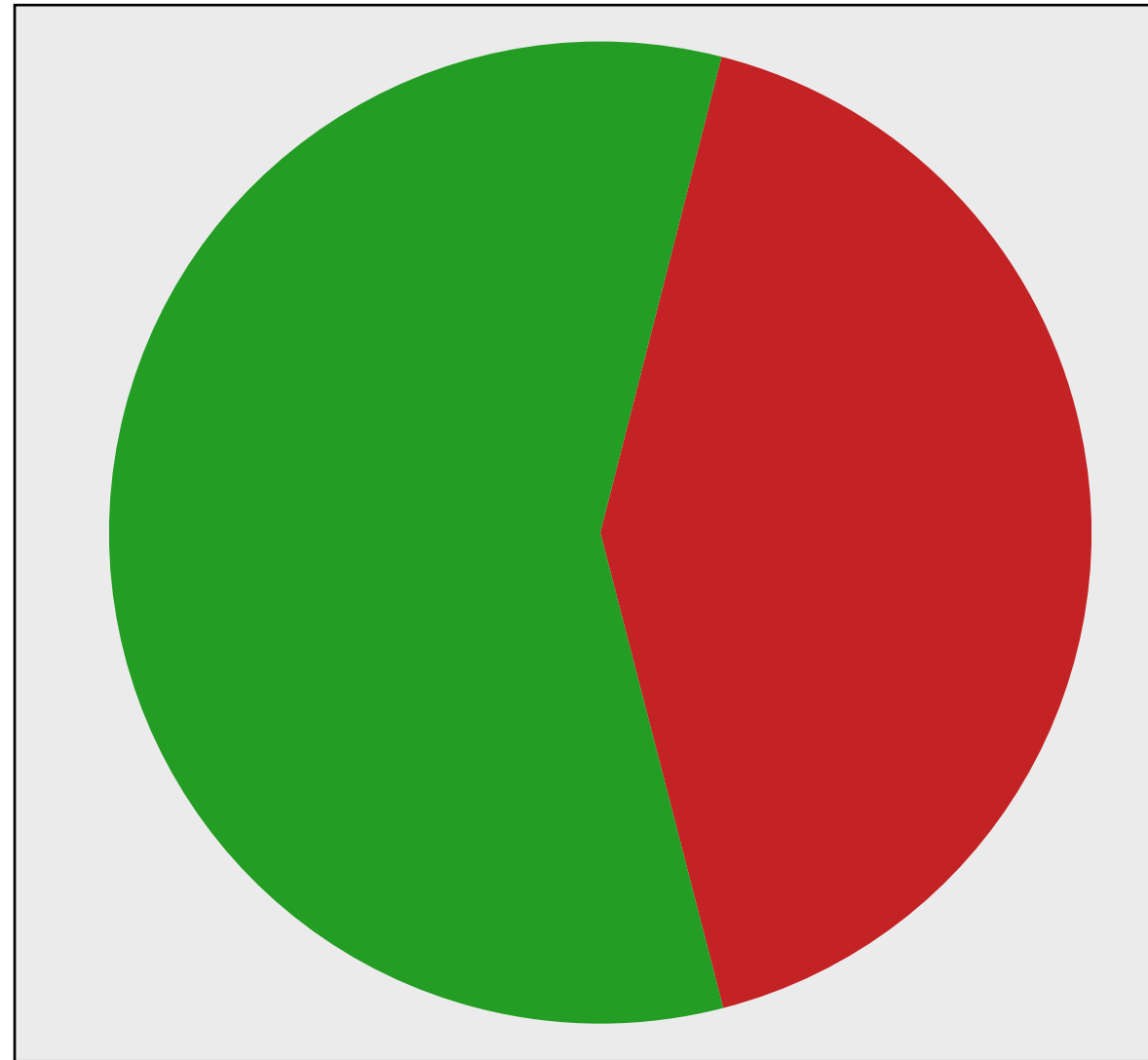
- Women had a higher incidence in answering 'Yes' (60%), compared to men (56%).
- Those aged 45-54 had the highest response to 'Yes' (61%), with the lowest response amongst the youngest age group 18-24 (54%).

Highest in ACT, TAS & QLD

- Across the States & Territories the highest responses were amongst those from:
 - ACT (66%), followed by TAS (62%) & QLD (61%)
 - The lowest responses were amongst NT (54%), SA (55%) & NSW (56%)
- Those from metropolitan areas had a higher level of responses (59%), compared to regional (57%), rural (56%) & remote (54%).

Household income & occupation key determinants

- Those from middle-higher income households had the highest responses:
 - \$175-199k (63%) & \$150-174k (61%)
- Conversely, those from lower-income households had the lowest responses:
 - \$50-74k (53%) & \$25-49k (54%)
- Independent Professionals (63%) & Employed Full-Time (60%) had the highest responses.
- Student (52%), Unemployed (53%) & Self-Employed (54%) had the lowest responses.



27% aged under 5 years received Influenza vaccine this year

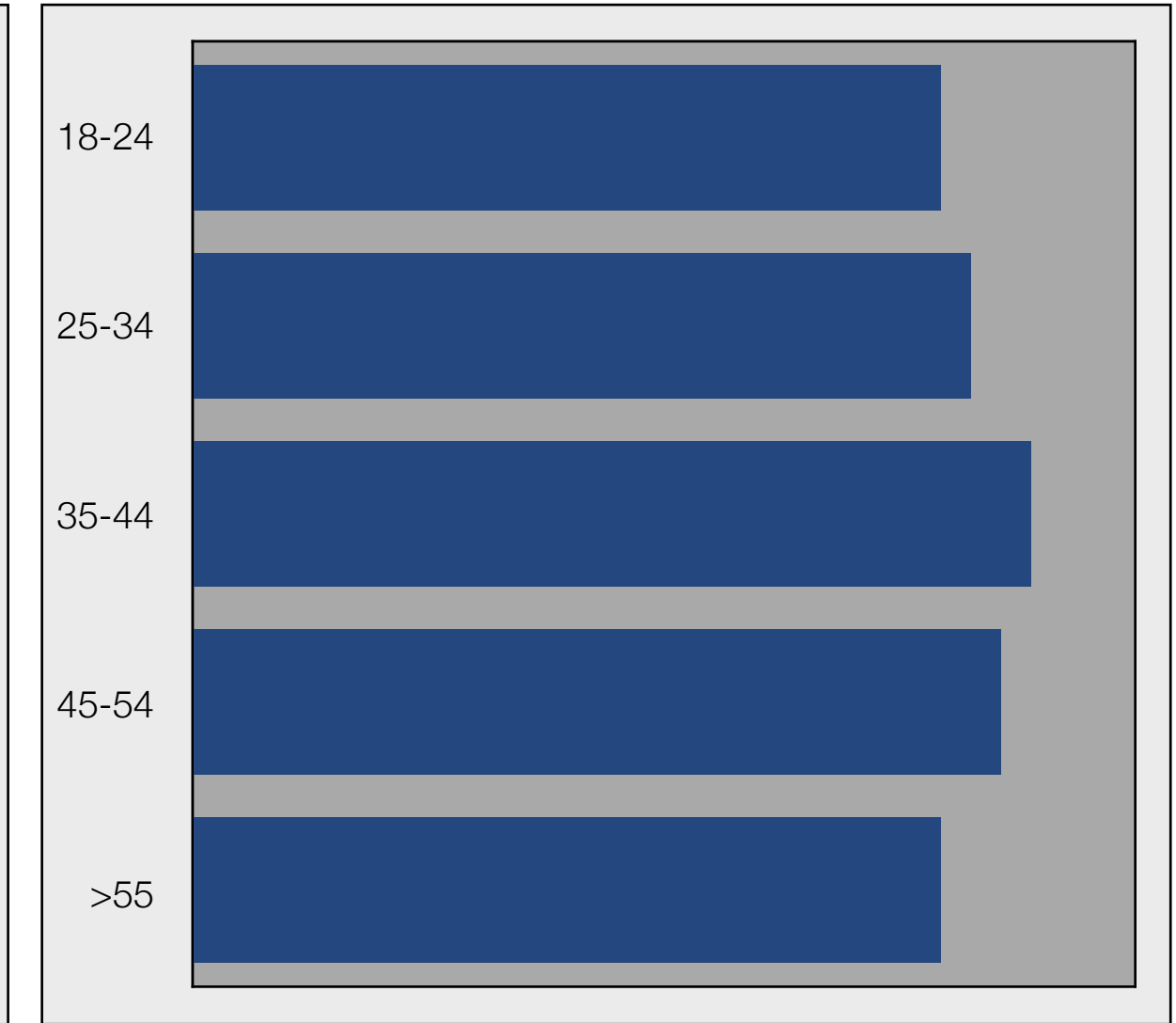
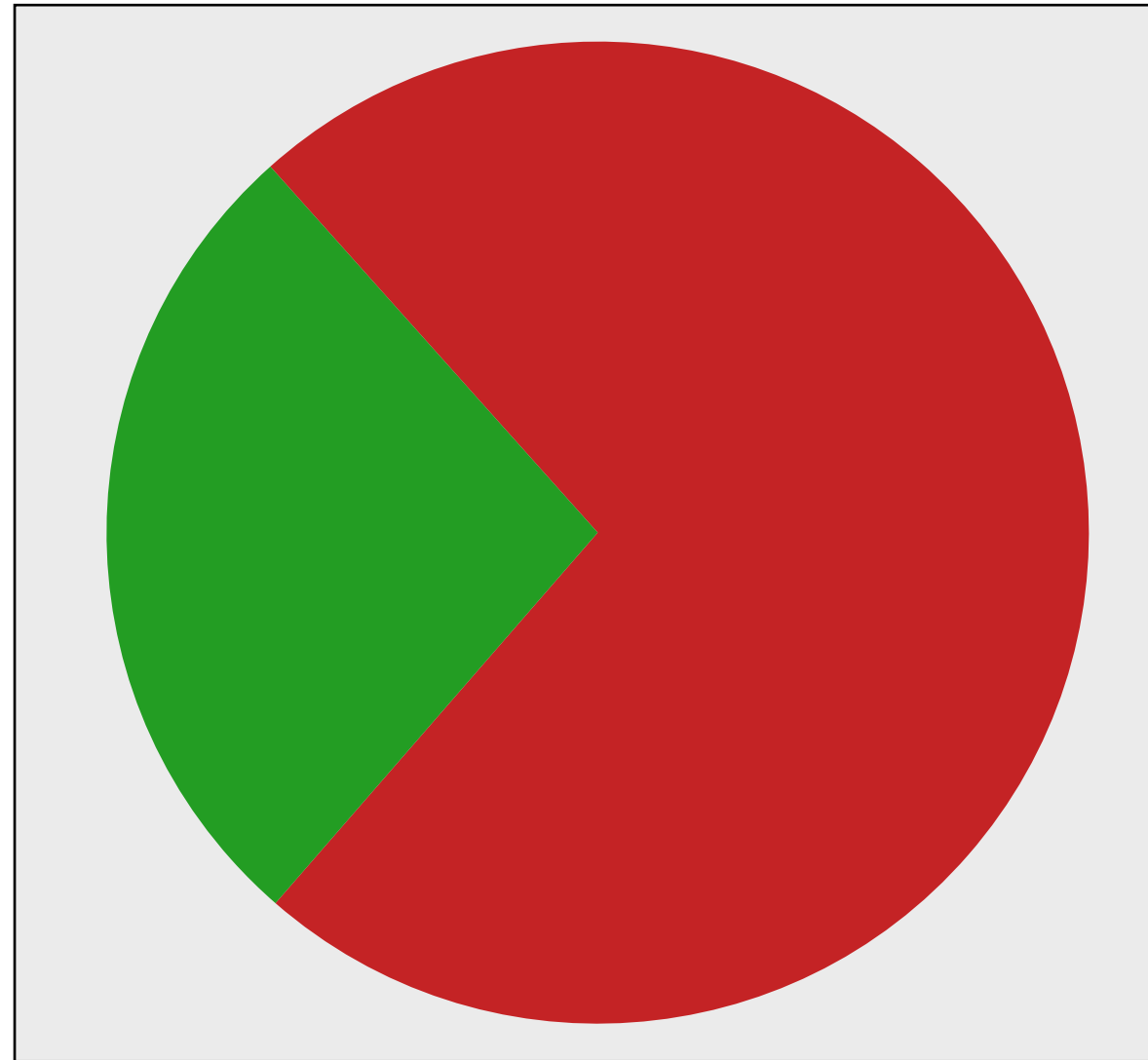
4. Was your child/children, aged under 5 years, vaccinated against Influenza this year?

27% vaccinated against Influenza this year

- For the question, illustrated in the opposite, top chart, 27% answered 'Yes'.
- This same question was asked in September 2023, to a similar sample, where 31% answered 'Yes'.

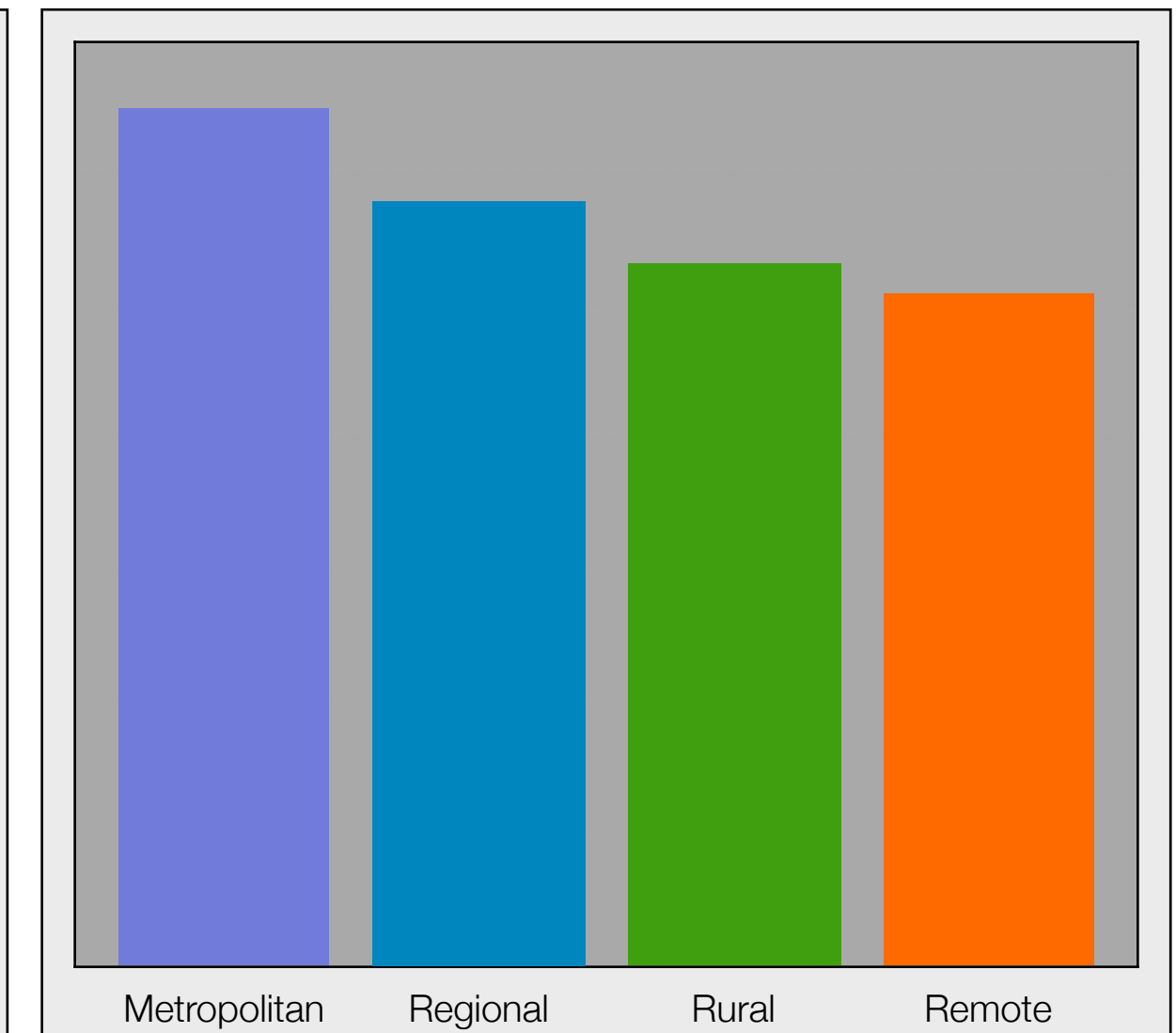
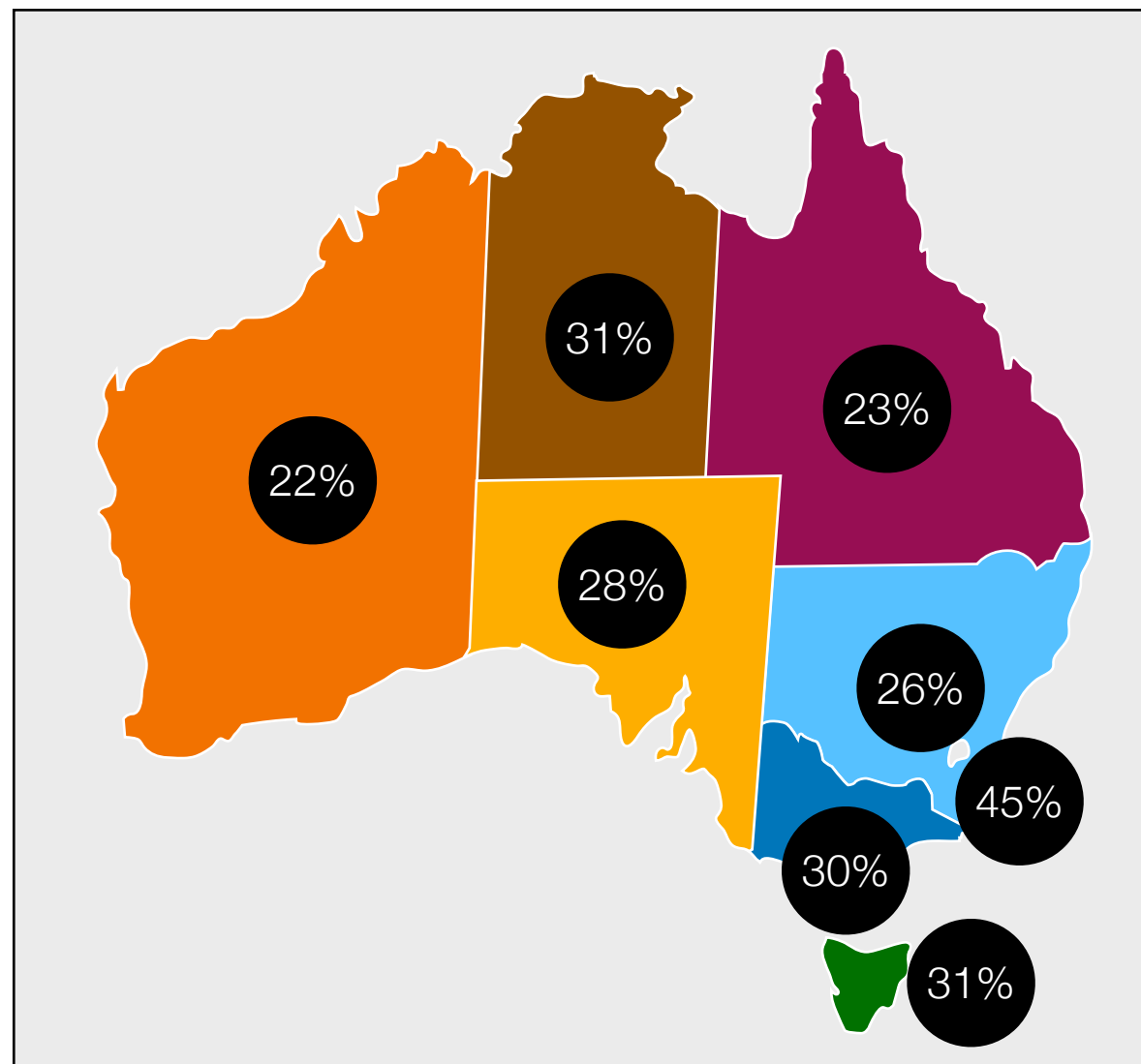
Location, household income & occupation the main determinants

- The main determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes', were geographic location, household income & occupation, summarised in the table below.



Determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes'

Age	Gender	State/Territory	Geographic Area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst parents aged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 35-44 (28%) - 45-54 (27%) • Lowest amongst those aged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18-24 (25%) - >55 (25%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slightly higher amongst women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women 28% - Men 25% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest amongst those from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACT (45%) - TAS & NT (31%) - VIC (30%) • Lowest amongst those from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WA (22%) - QLD (23%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst those from metropolitan areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Metropolitan (28%) - Regional (25%) - Rural (23%) - Remote (22%)
Household Income	Occupation	Education	Relationship Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst middle-higher income households: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$175-\$199k (30%) - \$200-224k (29%) • Lowest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$25-49k (23%) - \$50-74k (24%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest amongst those: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent Professional (33%) - Employed (Full-Time) (27%) • Lower amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-employed (22%) - Unemployed (24%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Postgraduate (28%) - Undergraduate (27%) - Apprenticeship (27%) • Lower amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Certificate (23%) - Technical Certificate (24%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Married (28%) - Partnered (26%) • Lowest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separated (23%) - Single (25%)

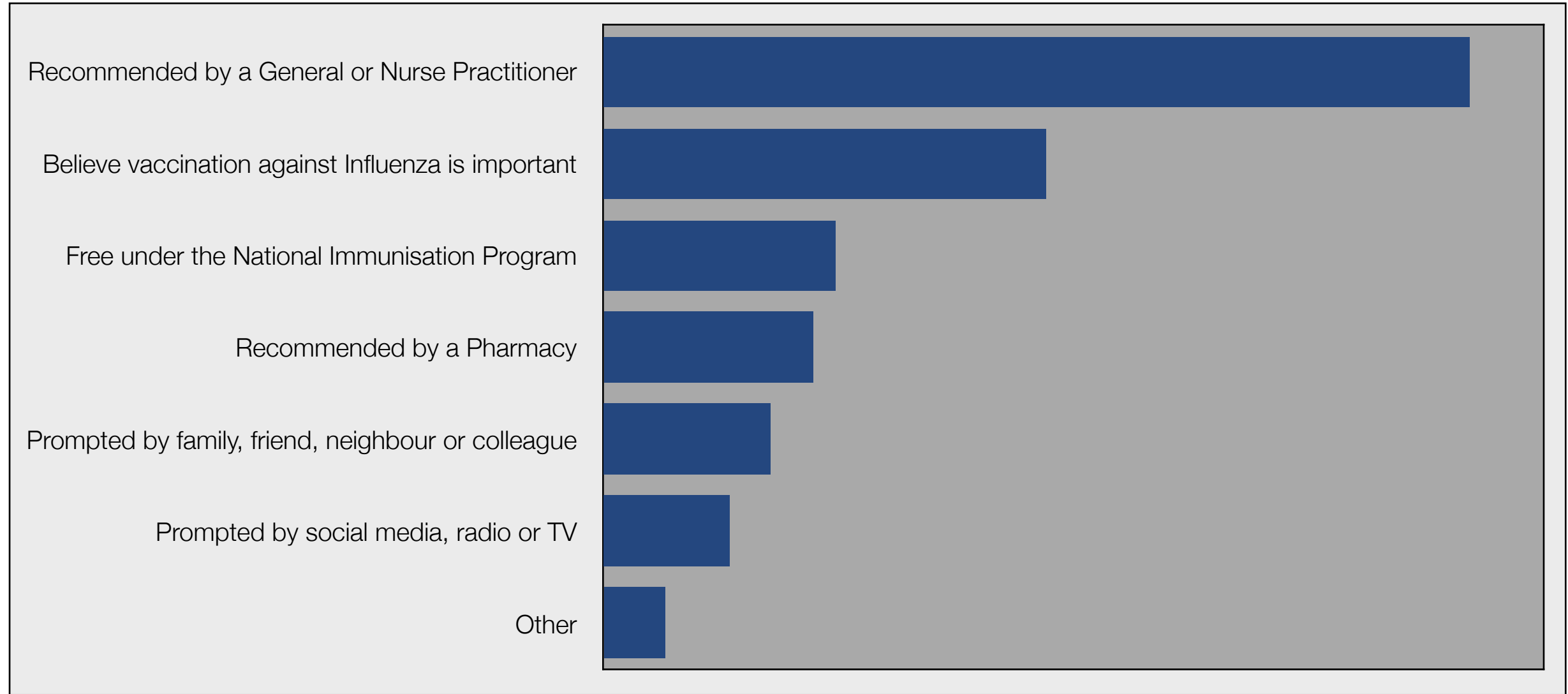


Recommendations by GP's and NP's the main reason for vaccination

5. What were the main reasons for having your child/children, aged under 5 years, vaccinated against Influenza this year?

Recommendations by GP's and NP's the main reason for vaccination

- For the question, illustrated in the opposite, top chart:
 - 'Recommended by a General or Nurse Practitioner' accounted for 41% of responses
 - 'Believe vaccination against Influenza is important' (21%)
 - 'Free under the National Immunisation Program' (11%)
 - 'Recommended by a Pharmacy' (10%)
 - 'Prompted by family, friend, neighbour or colleague' (8%)
 - 'Prompted by social media, radio or TV' (6%)
 - 3% answered 'Other' and stated their reasons



Household income the main determinant for GP & NP recommendation

- The main determinant for 'Recommended by a General or Nurse Practitioner' was household income, with a correlation towards those from higher income households, giving this response:
 - 48% with household income >\$175k; conversely, 37% with household income <\$75k

Education & relationship status main determinants vaccination important

- The main determinants for 'Believe vaccination against Influenza is important' were education & relationship status, where:
 - 26% with a Postgraduate degree & 23% with a Undergraduate degree gave this response
 - ▶ Conversely, 17% (School Certificate) & 20% (Higher School Certificate) gave this response
 - 24% who were married & 22% who were partnered gave this response
 - ▶ Conversely, 18% (Single) & 20% (Separated) gave this response

Recommended by child care centres, preschools & kindergartens

- The majority (47%) of 'Other' responses were related to recommendations from child care centre's, preschools & kindergartens where their child/children attended.
- Other common responses were:
 - Recommendations from new mothers/parenting groups
 - Government public health campaign
 - Belief that Influenza would be widespread and severe this year
 - Child/children previously having a negative experience with Influenza and wanting to be immunised this year

Insights into the main reasons for vaccinating this year

Consistency between qualitative & quantitative research

- Overall, there was a high degree of consistency between the findings from the qualitative (focus groups) and quantitative (survey) research, specifically:
 - ‘Recommended by a General or Nurse Practitioner’ was the main response, accounting for just under 50% of responses
 - ‘Believe vaccination against Influenza is important’ was the next highest response, accounting for around 25% of overall responses
 - ‘Recommended by a Pharmacy was the next highest, with just under 20% of responses, followed by ‘Prompted by family, friend, neighbour or colleague’ (around 10% of responses)
 - There were minimal responses for ‘Free under the National Immunisation Program’, or ‘Prompted by social media, radio or TV’

“Yes, I am the same as what Anne just said, my GP was the one who recommended it for my 3 year old and I follow her advice, she’s the expert.”

Louise, 39, Workplace Relations Advocate, Bulleen (Melbourne) VIC

“I think it is just one of those things you have to do with young children, they are a magnet for picking up the flu and viruses. Also, contrary to what some people think, they don’t have strong immune system’s, their immune systems are developing and a bad case of the flu can do more harm than a vaccination.”

Rick, 44, Accountant, Tarooma (Hobart) TAS

“My sister’s daughter is a few months older than my son, so we often discuss things like this and we both decided to vaccinate them earlier this year before the onset of winter, so that’s what I recall as being my main reason, although my GP probably would have recommended it also and that would have also swayed my decision to have him vaccinated.”

Yana, 33, Executive Assistant, Denistone (Sydney) NSW

Recommended by child care centres, preschools & kindergartens

- A small number gave ‘Other’ reasons, which were very similar to those given in the survey, specifically:
 - Recommendations from child care centre's, preschools & kindergartens where their child/children attended
 - ▶ Was found to be common amongst all who had children attending them
 - Belief that Influenza would be widespread and severe this year
 - ▶ Media coverage of the flu being widespread earlier than usual this year and reports that the strains of flu would be severe this year, were cited as being reasons for vaccination this year, especially in April-May
 - Child/children previously having a negative experience with Influenza
 - ▶ When probed, was stated to be a key reason for vaccination this year
 - Recommendations from new mothers/parenting groups

“The child care centre where my son attends has been strongly recommending to all parents to have their kids vaccinated this year because there seems to be constant outbreaks of the flu, I was already planning to have him vaccinated but this was another reason why I did it.”

Eva, 42, Strata Manager, North Ryde (Sydney) NSW

“I can remember that the flu was going around a lot earlier this year, both my parents had it and were really sick with it, plus the government (Queensland) had made it free this year which was another reason all our family had it.”

Trisha, 37, Business Owner, Toowoomba QLD

May & June the most common months for Influenza vaccination

6. When was your child/children, aged under 5 years, vaccinated against Influenza this year?

Asked to those who's child/children received an Influenza vaccination

- This question was asked to the 27% who answered 'Yes' previously, that their child/children received an Influenza vaccination this year.

May & June the most common months for Influenza vaccination

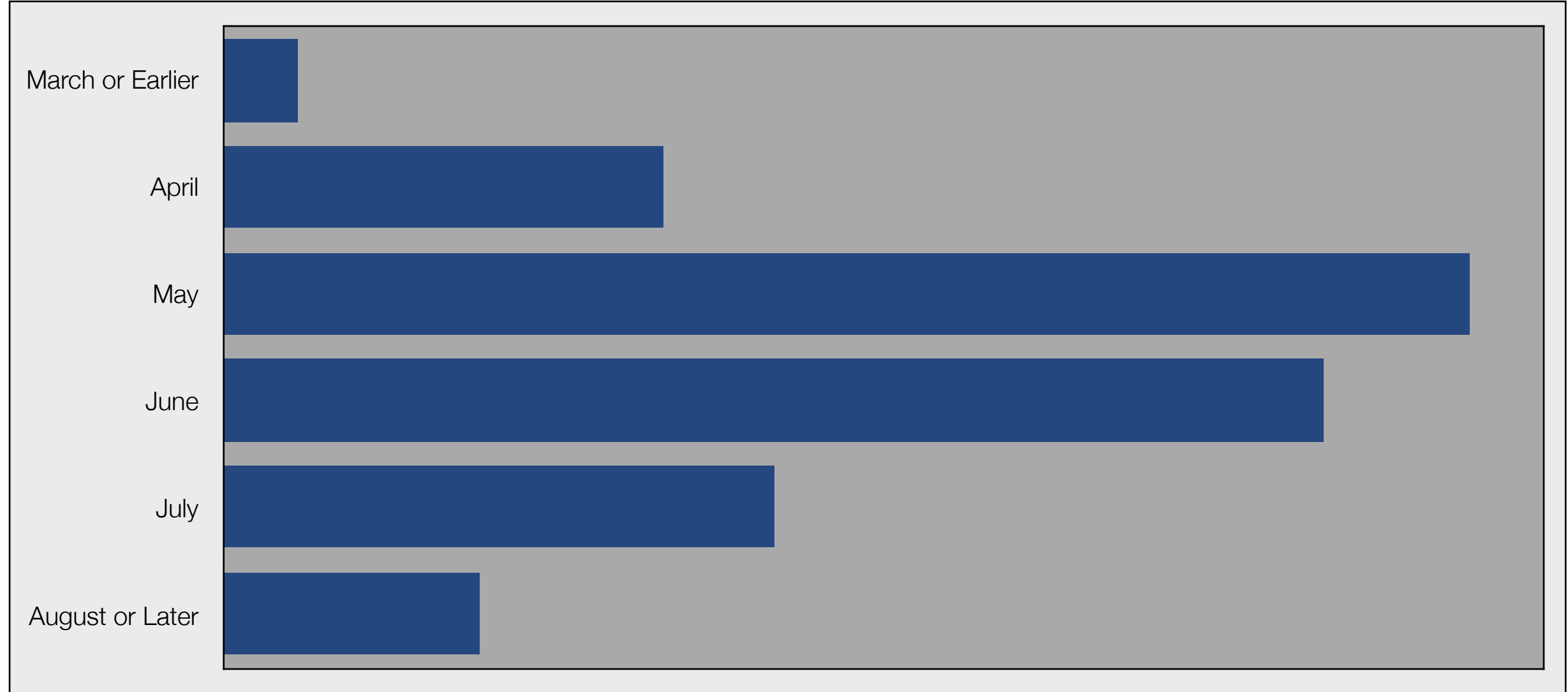
- Illustrated in the chart opposite:
 - The most common months were 'May' (34%), followed by 'June' (30%)
 - 15% were vaccinated in 'July' & 12% in 'April'
 - 2% were vaccinated 'March or Earlier' & 7% 'August or Later'

May & June popular as viewed as onset on winter

- The focus groups provided insight into why vaccination occurred across the months.
- May and June were the most common months due to:
 - Viewed as the onset of winter in many geographic areas
 - The incidence and severity of Influenza is more widely reported in these months, being a prompt for many to consider and arrange vaccination

April is when latest vaccine is available

- Those who are most mindful towards vaccination are aware that April and early autumn, is typically when this year's Influenza vaccination becomes available and they arrange for vaccination to occur at this time, to be as protected as early as possible.
- Childcare centres, preschools & kindergartens commence recommending vaccination from this time which is another driver of vaccination from April.



July, August or later are often brought about by incidence & severity

- Many of those who vaccinated in July, or August or later, were swayed to do so from becoming aware of the high incidence and severity of Influenza.
- Around half of those who vaccinated their children/children during this time, stated that they were not planning to vaccinate this year, but did so due to the high incidence and severity of Influenza that they became aware of, predominately via:
 - Child care centres, preschools & kindergartens advising parents that Influenza was going around and encouraging vaccination
 - Personal contacts, namely family & friends, having severe symptoms from recent Influenza
 - The incidence and severity of this winter's Influenza being reported in the media

Don't believe Influenza is serious, the main reason for not vaccinating

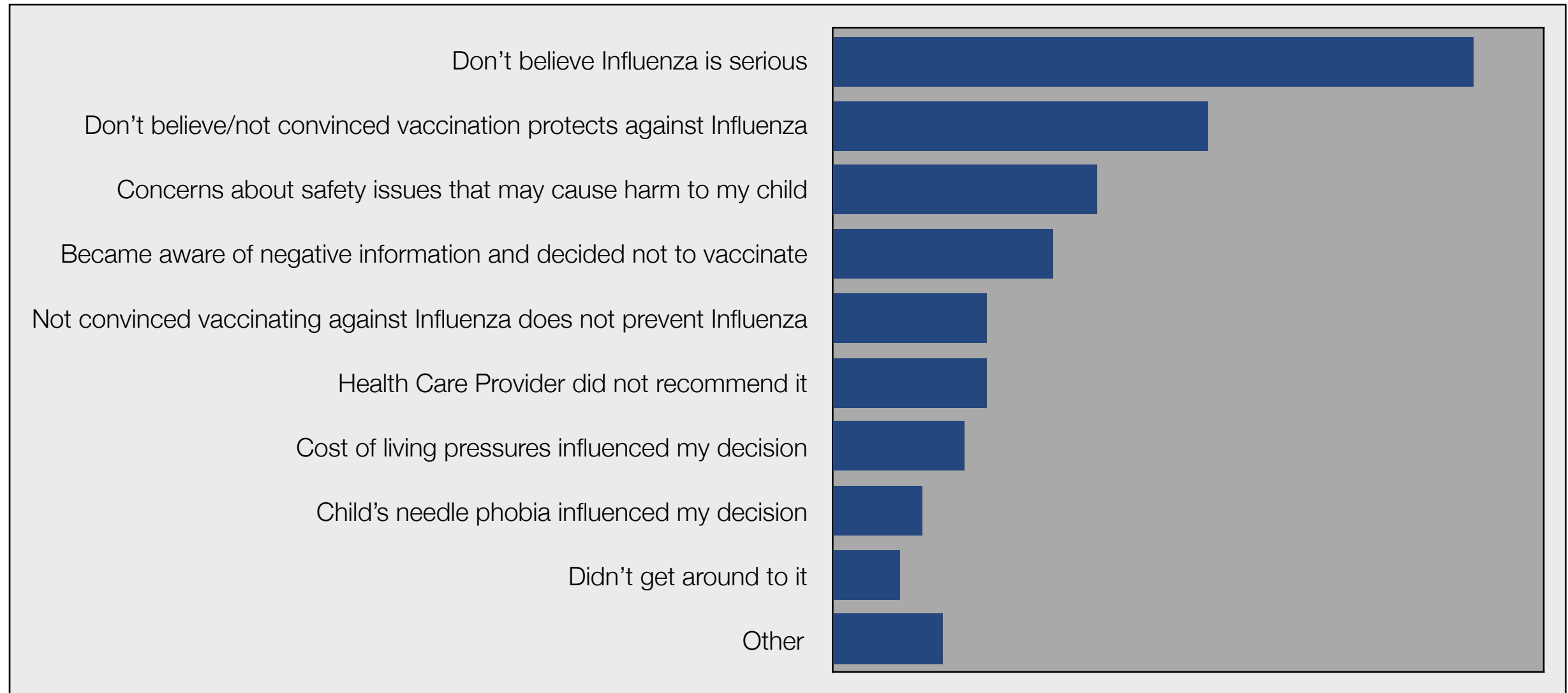
7. What were your main reasons for not having your child/children, aged under 5 years, vaccinated against Influenza this year?

Asked to those who's child/children were not vaccinated

- This question was asked to the 73% who answered 'No' previously, that their child/children did not receive an Influenza vaccination this year.

Don't believe Influenza is serious the main reason

- The main response was 'Don't believe Influenza is serious' which accounted for 29% of overall responses.
- The other main reasons being:
 - 'Don't believe/not convinced vaccination protects against Influenza' (17%)
 - 'Concerns about safety issues that may cause harm to my child' (12%)
 - 'Became aware of negative information and decided not to vaccinate' (10%)
 - 'Not convinced vaccinating against Influenza does not prevent Influenza' (7%)
 - 'Health Care Provider did not recommend it' (7%)
 - 'Cost of living pressures influenced my decision' (6%)
 - 'Child's needle phobia influenced my decision' (4%)
 - 'Didn't get around to it' (3%)
 - 'Other' (5%)



Other reasons given

- 5% responded 'Other' and specified what their reason/s were, the main being:
 - Child/children already had Influenza, so didn't believe subsequent vaccination was required this winter, this accounted for almost 25% of all 'Other' responses
 - Concern that their child/children has had too many vaccinations in recent years, with the COVID vaccinations commonly cited (around 15%)
 - View that the Influenza vaccine is not effective or has limited effectiveness (around 10%)
 - Belief that it is natural for children to contract Influenza and that it helps to build a child's immunity (around 10%)
 - View that contracting Influenza is less harmful to a child than the Influenza vaccine (around 5%)
 - Belief that the Influenza vaccine is especially harmful to babies and toddlers (around 5%)
 - Difficulty in arranging GP/clinic appointment, or were waiting for an appointment (around 5%)

Insights into the main reasons for not vaccinating this year

Majority don't believe Influenza is serious enough for children

- There was here was a high degree of consistency between the findings from the qualitative (focus groups) and quantitative (survey) research, specifically:
 - The main response given, without any prompting was that Influenza is not viewed as being serious enough in young children, to warrant vaccination
 - Similarly, the next main unprompted response was that many do not believe the Influenza vaccination is sufficiently effective to warrant being given

"I know that it (Influenza) can be serious in some people, like the elderly or those with some medical problems, but 99.9% of the time young kids are fine, they are strong and don't need annual flu shots."

Bradley, 43, Software Engineer, North Lakes QLD

Concerns about safety and have come across negative information

- The other main reasons were related to the safety of the Influenza vaccination in young children and having come across negative information about it, specifically:
 - Several mentioned their child/children or others known to them, had strong side effects, allergic reactions or contracted the flu immediately after vaccination
 - Around a third mentioned that they had come across negative information regarding the safety of the Influenza vaccine and adverse effects it can have on children
 - ▶ Notable was 4 parents in 2 different focus group mentioning they had come across negative information in the last 1-2 years that the Influenza vaccination may cause autism in children

"My wife and I have erred on the side of caution, we are not sold on our kids needing this (Influenza vaccination) every year, there is a lot of information about how the Influenza vaccine weakens children's natural immune systems and we just don't think it's necessary and there is some information around suggesting that the Influenza vaccine and other childhood vaccines may be behind autism."

Len, 45, Baking Equipment Supplier, McKinnon (Melbourne) VIC

Influenza vaccination not required after recently having had Influenza

- Without probing, several respondents mentioned a similar finding from the survey, being the belief that if a child recently had Influenza, a subsequent vaccination was not required for the rest of the winter flu period.
- When probed about this, most said they believed that having Influenza builds immunity against it and the main strains for 12 months.

"Our son who just turned 4 caught it (Influenza) earlier in the year, probably around late April or early May, so we decided not to have him vaccinated because he would have built up a fair bit off immunity from that and he has been fine since."

Brooke, 33, Store Manager, Warabrook (Newcastle) NSW

Vaccination hesitancy and fatigue, largely due to COVID

- Also similar to the findings in the survey, many mentioned vaccination hesitancy and fatigue as an unprompted reason, or as a secondary reason.
- When probed, the initial COVID vaccinations and subsequent boosters were cited as being the predominant reason for having developed hesitancy and fatigue, with many parents believing their children have had too many vaccinations in recent years, with many having concerns about the longer-term effects this may have.

"I'm not against vaccination, but like what a few others have said, I also feel that we have all been having too many vaccinations since the original COVID two and then the boosters...we can all remember having strong side effects from them, at least I did and everyone I know, so I don't think most healthy people to need so many, especially yearly COVID and Influenza ones, and thats why my kids didn't get it (Influenza vaccination) this year, they have had too many vaccinations in the last 3 years and I'm becoming wary of what longer terms effects they may have on my kids."

Aarya, 38, Business Owner, Yangebup (Perth) WA

29% have been exposed to Influenza vaccination misinformation

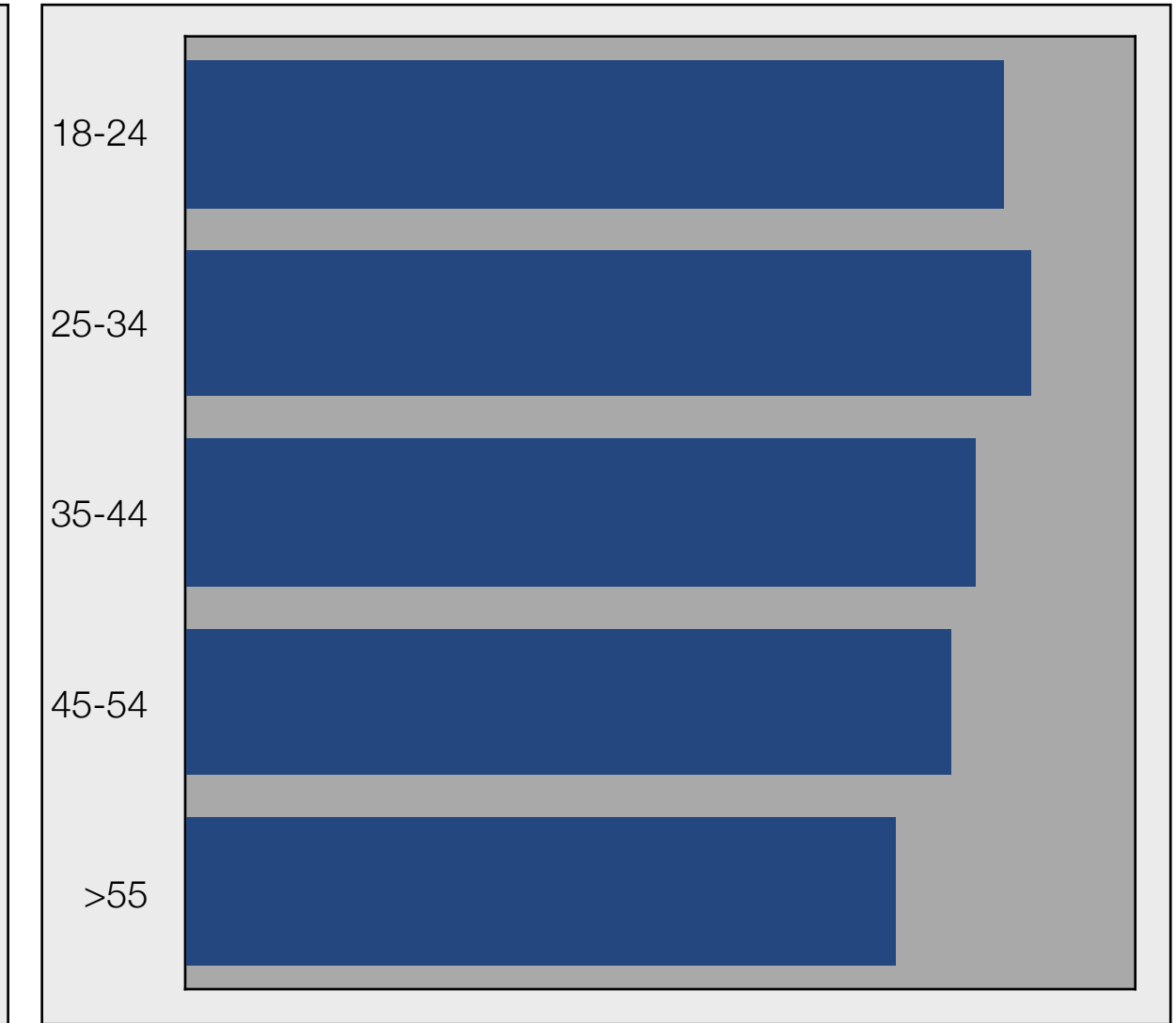
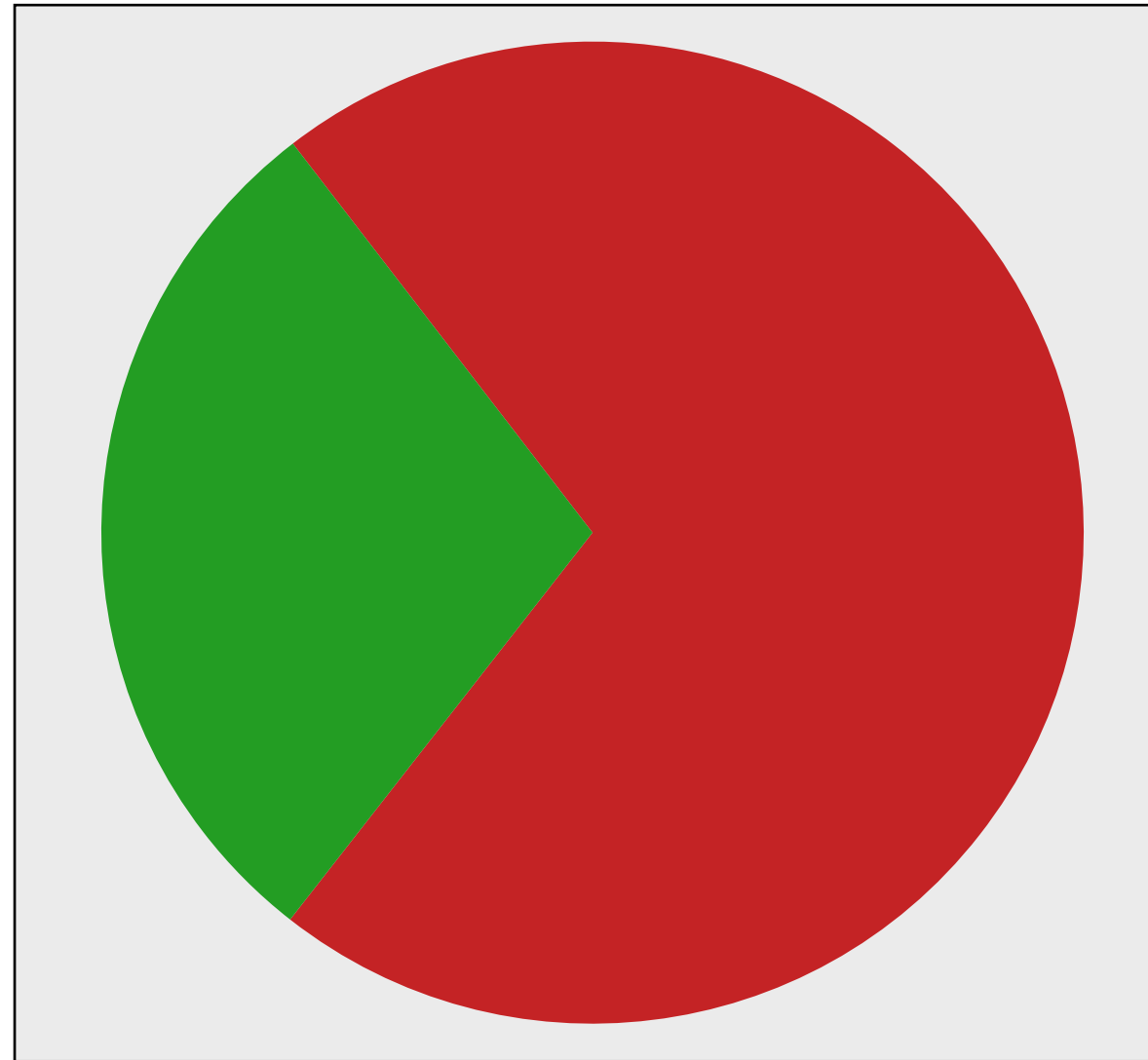
8. Have you been exposed to misinformation concerning Influenza vaccination for your child/children?

29% have been exposed to Influenza vaccination misinformation

- Illustrated in the opposite, top chart, 29% answered 'Yes' & 71% 'No'.

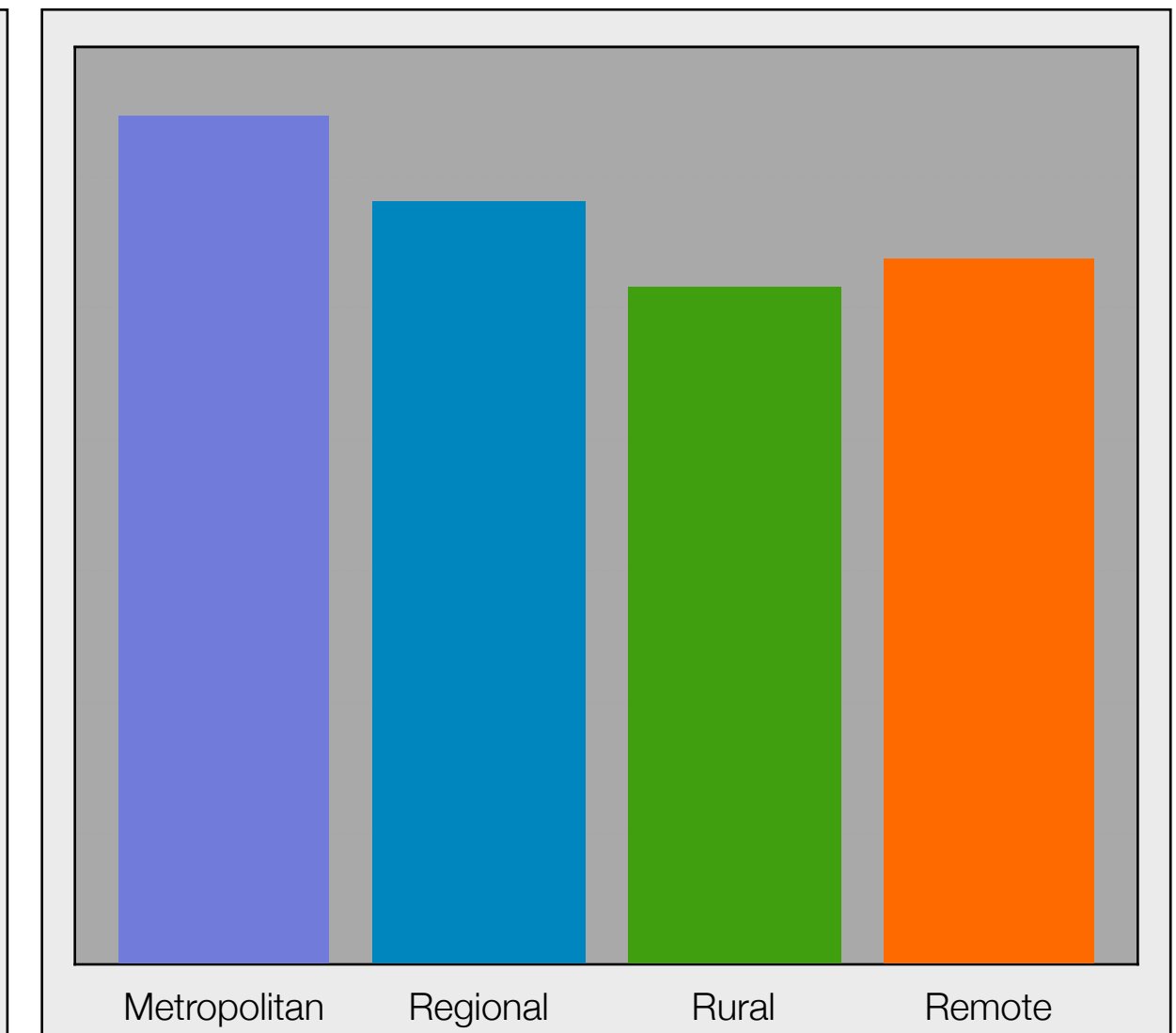
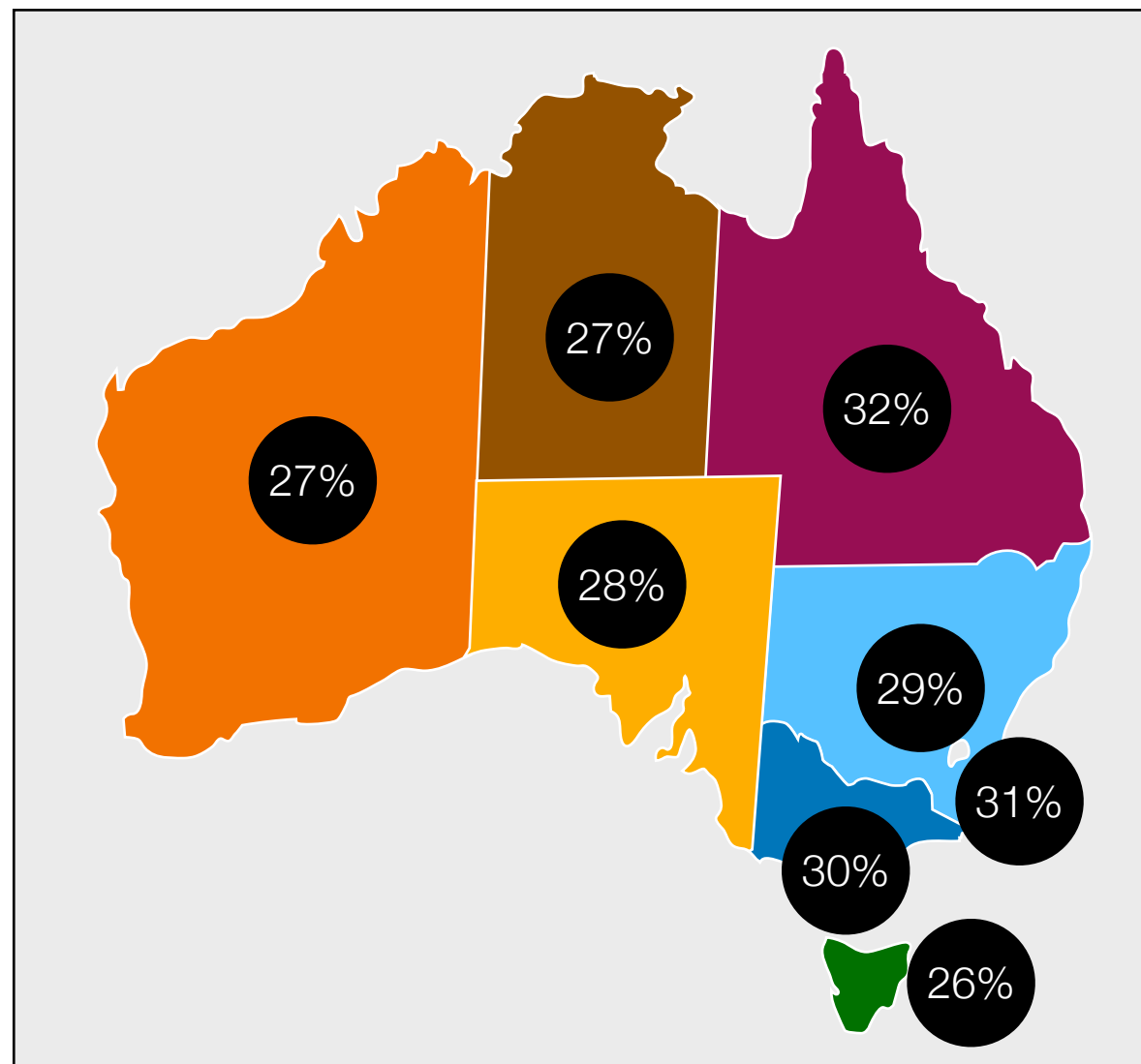
Gender, occupation, & household income the main determinants

- The main determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes', were gender, occupation & household income, summarised in the table below.
- All other demographic, geographic & socio-economic factors were also determinants with noticeable variation amongst those who answered 'Yes'.



Determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes'

Age <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst parents aged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 35-44 (31%) - 18-24 (30%) • Lower amongst those aged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - >55 (26%) - 45-54 (28%) 	Gender <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women 32% - Men 25% 	State/Territory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst those from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - QLD (32%) - ACT (31%) - VIC (30%) • Lower amongst those from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TAS (26%) - WA & NT (27%) 	Geographic Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst those from metropolitan areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Metropolitan (30%) - Regional (27%) - Rural (24%) - Remote (25%)
Household Income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst middle-lower income households: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$125-\$149k (34%) - \$100-124k (32%) • Lower amongst high-income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - >\$250+ (23%) - \$225-\$249k (25%) 	Occupation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doesn't work/Home (35%) - Self-employed (32%) • Lowest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent Professional (26%) - Business Owner (27%) 	Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade Certificate (33%) - Higher School Cert (32%) - Apprenticeship (31%) • Lower amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undergraduate (27%) - Postgraduate (27%) 	Relationship Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnered (33%) - Single (32%) • Lower amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Divorced (27%) - Separated (28%)



Influenza vaccine is not effective the main misinformation

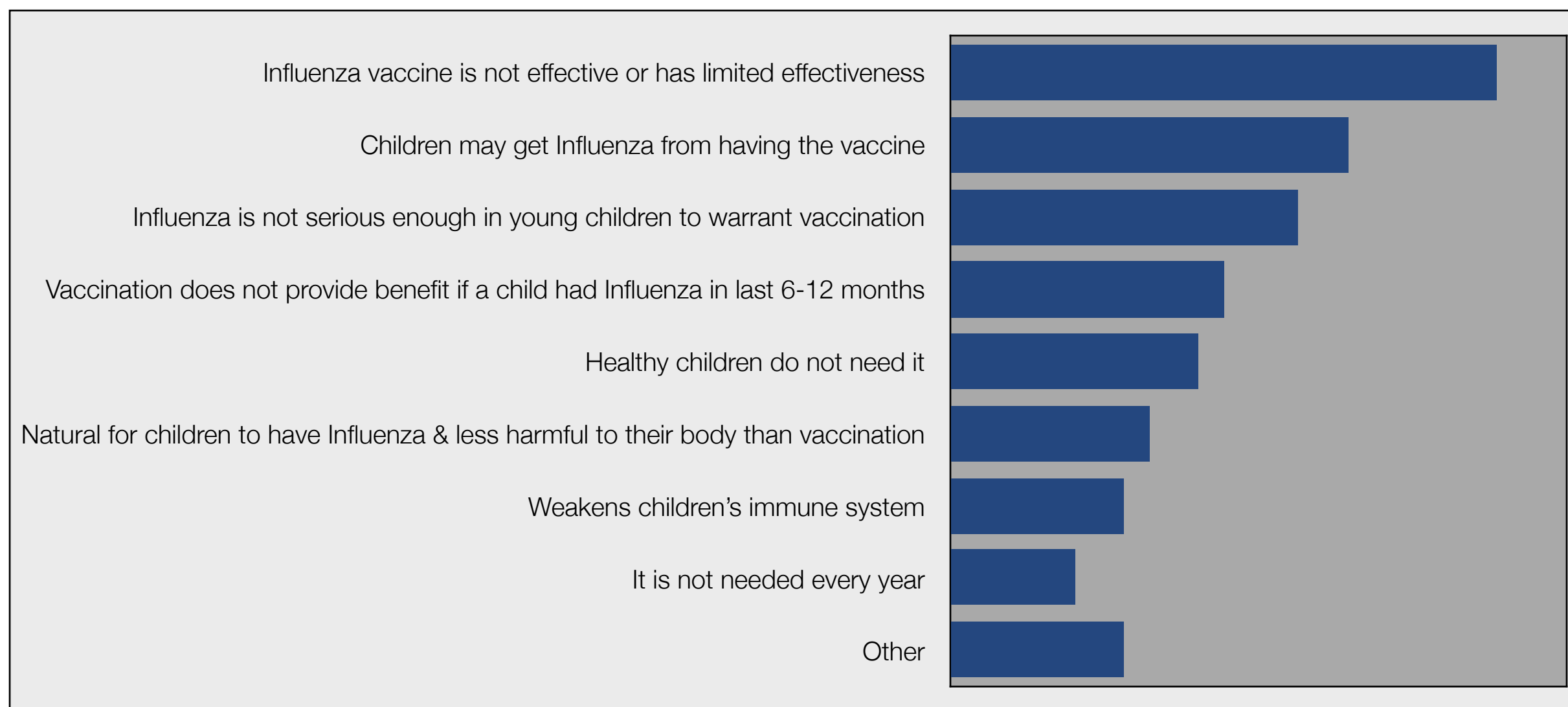
9. Can you describe what was the misinformation you have been exposed to?

Influenza vaccine is not effective the main misinformation

- The main response was ‘Influenza vaccine is not effective or has limited effectiveness’ which accounted for 22% of overall responses.
- The other main misinformation exposed to were:
 - ‘Children may get Influenza from having the vaccine’ (16%)
 - ‘Influenza is not serious enough in young children to warrant vaccination’ (14%)
 - ‘Vaccination does not provide benefit if a child had Influenza in last 6-12 months’ (11%)
 - ‘Healthy children do not need it’ (10%)
 - ‘Natural for children to have Influenza & less harmful to their body than vaccination’ (8%)
 - ‘Weakens child’s immune system’ (7%)
 - ‘It is not needed every year’ (5%)
 - 7% answered ‘Other’ and stated the misinformation they have been exposed to

Variation across demographic, geographic & socio-economic factors

- Overall there was minimal variation across demographic, geographic & socio-economic factors in the responses given, apart from:
 - ‘Influenza vaccine is not effective or has limited effectiveness’ highest amongst:
 - ▶ Lower income households (<75k), where 25% from this group gave this response
 - ‘Influenza is not serious enough in young children to warrant vaccination’ highest amongst:
 - ▶ Lower income households (<75k), where 18% from this group gave this response
 - ▶ Those with lower education levels, where 20% with School Certificate as their highest level of education gave this response
 - ‘Vaccination does not provide benefit if a child had Influenza in last 6-12 months’ highest amongst:
 - ▶ Lower income households (<75k), where 15% from this group gave this response



Other reasons given

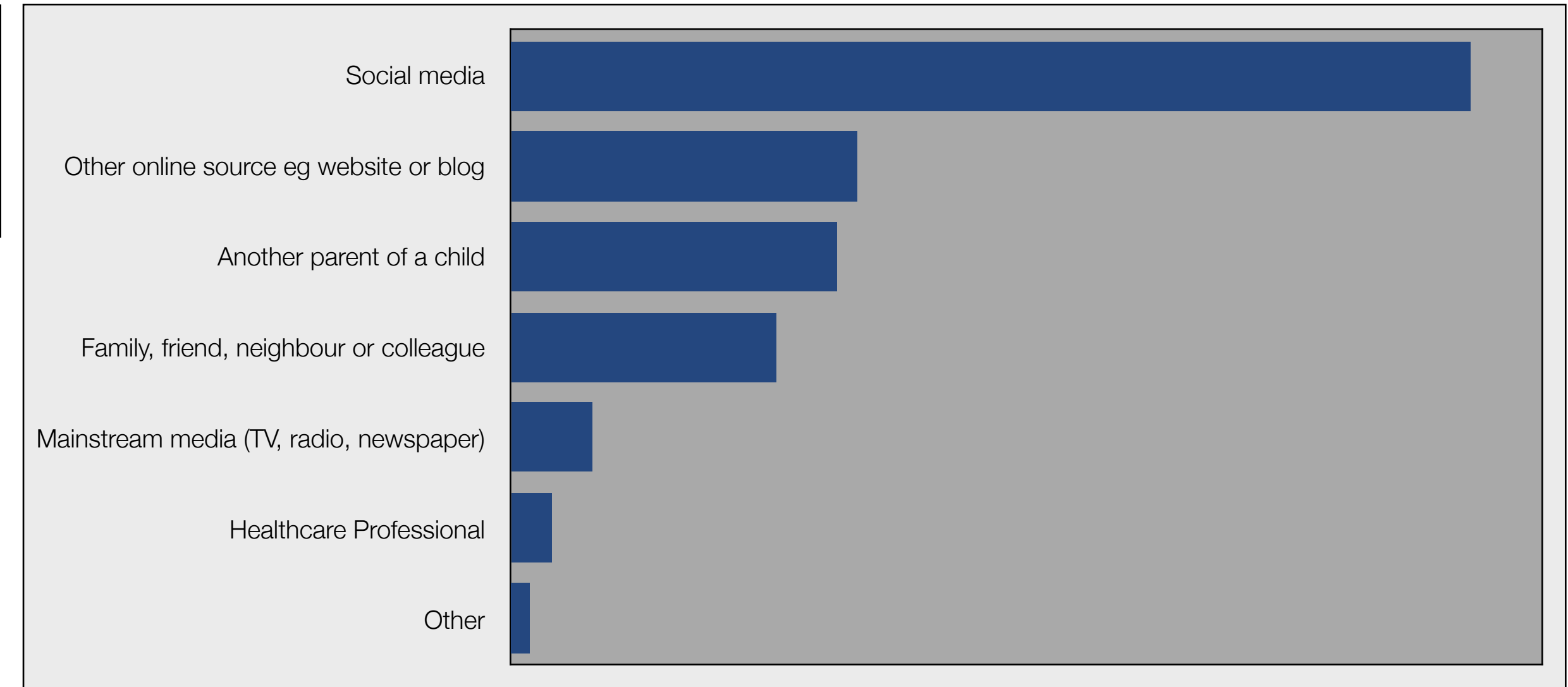
- 7% responded ‘Other’ and specified what they have been exposed to, the main being:
 - Influenza is not harmful to the vast majority of children, similar to the answer option ‘Influenza is not serious enough in young children to warrant vaccination’, this accounted for around 20% of all ‘Other’ responses
 - Influenza vaccine is especially harmful to babies and toddlers (around 15%)
 - Belief that it is natural for children to contract Influenza and that it helps to build a child’s immunity (around 10%)
 - Linked to Autism (around 10%)
 - Better to have a healthy diet and lifestyle to build natural immunity (around 10%)
 - Influenza is less harmful to a child than the Influenza vaccine (around 5%)
 - Adverse side effects prove it is not safe (around 5%)
 - Contains harmful chemicals such as formaldehyde (around 5%)

Social media dominates, accounting for 47% of misinformation

10. What was the source of the misinformation?

Social media dominates, accounting for 47% of misinformation

- Illustrated in the chart opposite:
 - The highest response by far was 'Social media' which accounted for 47% of responses
 - 'Other online source eg, website or blog' (17%)
 - 'Another parent of a child' (16%)
 - 'Family, friend, neighbour or colleague' (13%)
 - 'Mainstream media (TV, radio, newspaper)' (4%)
 - 'Healthcare Professional' (2%)
 - 1% answered 'Other' and stated their sources, with most being an online source



Variation across the sources of misinformation

- Across the demographic, geographic & socio-economic factors, the main variations were where women had higher responses than men relating to:
 - 'Another parent of a child' women (19%), men (13%)
 - 'Social media' women (45%), men (39%)
 - 'Family, friend, neighbour or colleague' women (16%), men (11%)

Specific sources of misinformation

- In a sub-question, respondents were asked to specify the specific sources of misinformation they were exposed to, for several of the main categories, summarised in the table opposite.

Specific sources of misinformation

Social Media	Other Online Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook (28%) • X (Twitter) (17%) • TikTok (16%) • Reddit (13%) • Instagram (12%) • YouTube (9%) • Podcasts (3%) • Douyin (<1%) • WeChat (<1%) • Weibo (<1%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites (11%) • Blogs (4%) • Forums & Communities (non-social media) (2%)
Mainstream Media	Healthcare Professionals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio (2%) • Newspapers (1%) • Magazines (<1%) • TV (<1%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main Healthcare Professionals stated were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Midwife (<1%) - Pharmacist (<1%) • Allied Health Professionals made up the remainder, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physiotherapists - Chiropractors - Osteopaths - Dieticians & Nutritionists

36% influenced not to vaccinate against Influenza due to misinformation

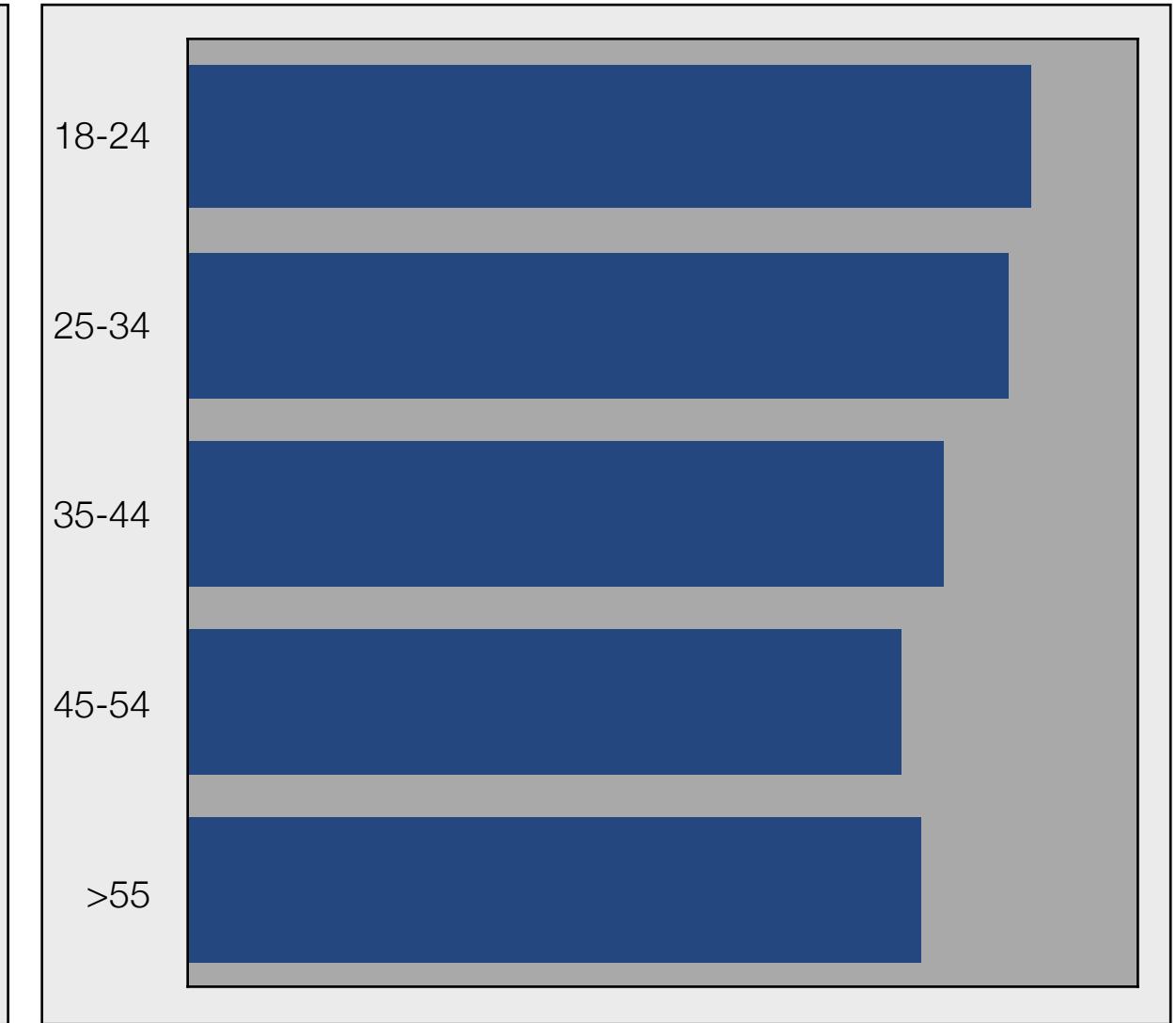
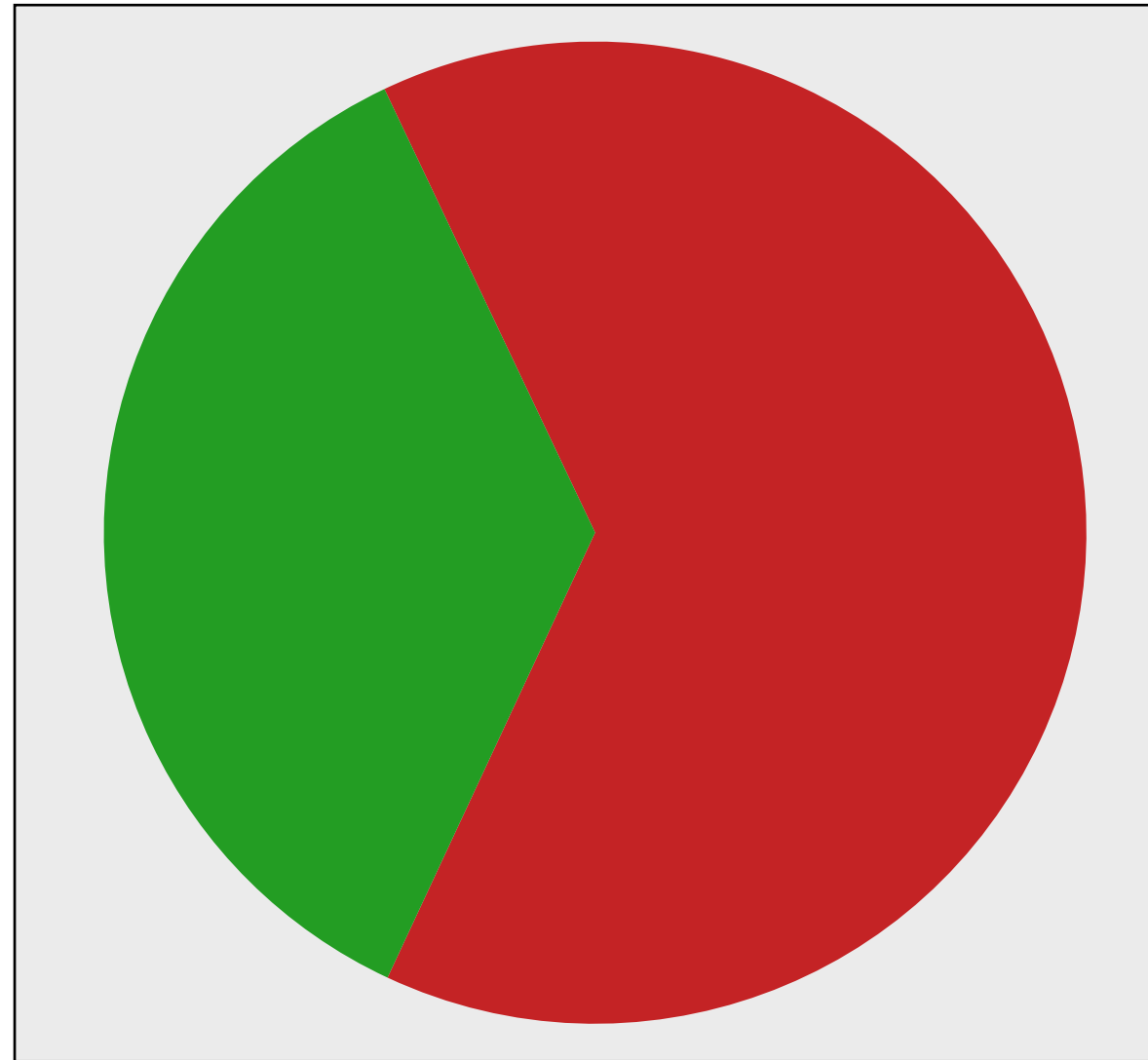
11. Has this misinformation influenced your decision not to vaccinate your child/children against Influenza?

36% influenced not to vaccinate against Influenza due to misinformation

- Illustrated in the opposite, top chart, 36% answered 'Yes' & 64% 'No'.

Relationship status, household income & education main determinants

- The main determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes', were relationship status, household income & education, summarised in the table below.
- All other demographic, geographic & socio-economic factors were also determinants with noticeable variation amongst those who answered 'Yes'.



Determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes'

Age

- Slightly higher amongst younger parents:
 - 18-24 (39%)
 - 25-34 (38%)
- Lowest amongst those aged:
 - 45-54 (33%)
 - >55 (34%)

Gender

- Higher amongst women:
 - Women 38%
 - Men 34%

State/Territory

- Highest amongst those from:
 - WA (41%)
 - QLD (38%)
 - SA (37%)
- Lowest amongst those from:
 - ACT (31%)
 - TAS (33%)

Geographic Area

- Slightly higher amongst those from regional & rural areas:
 - Regional (38%)
 - Rural (47%)
 - Metropolitan (36%)
 - Remote (34%)

Household Income

- Higher amongst lower income households:
 - \$50-\$74k (40%)
 - \$75-99k (39%)
- Lowest amongst:
 - \$200-\$224k (31%)
 - >\$250k (32%)

Occupation

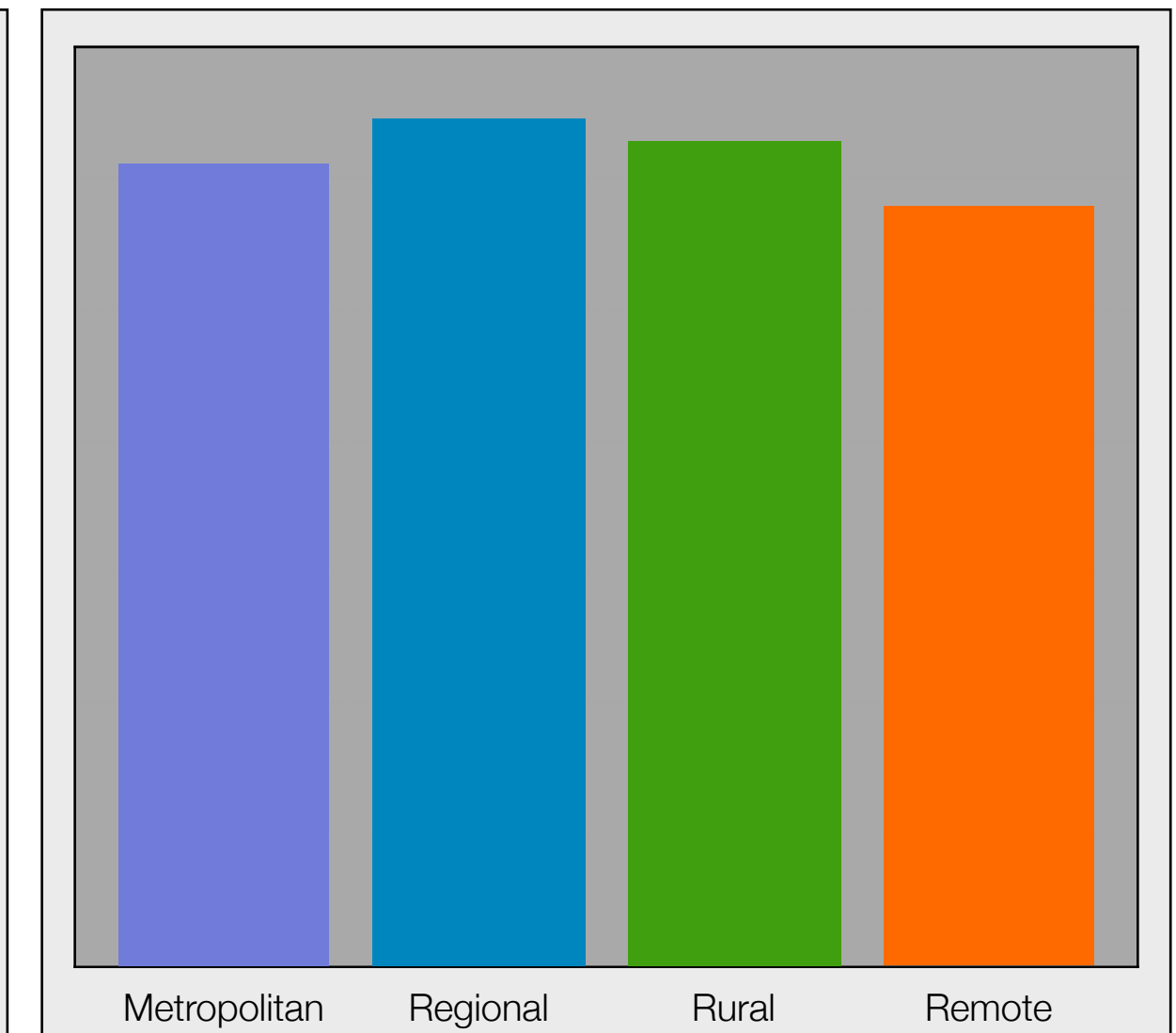
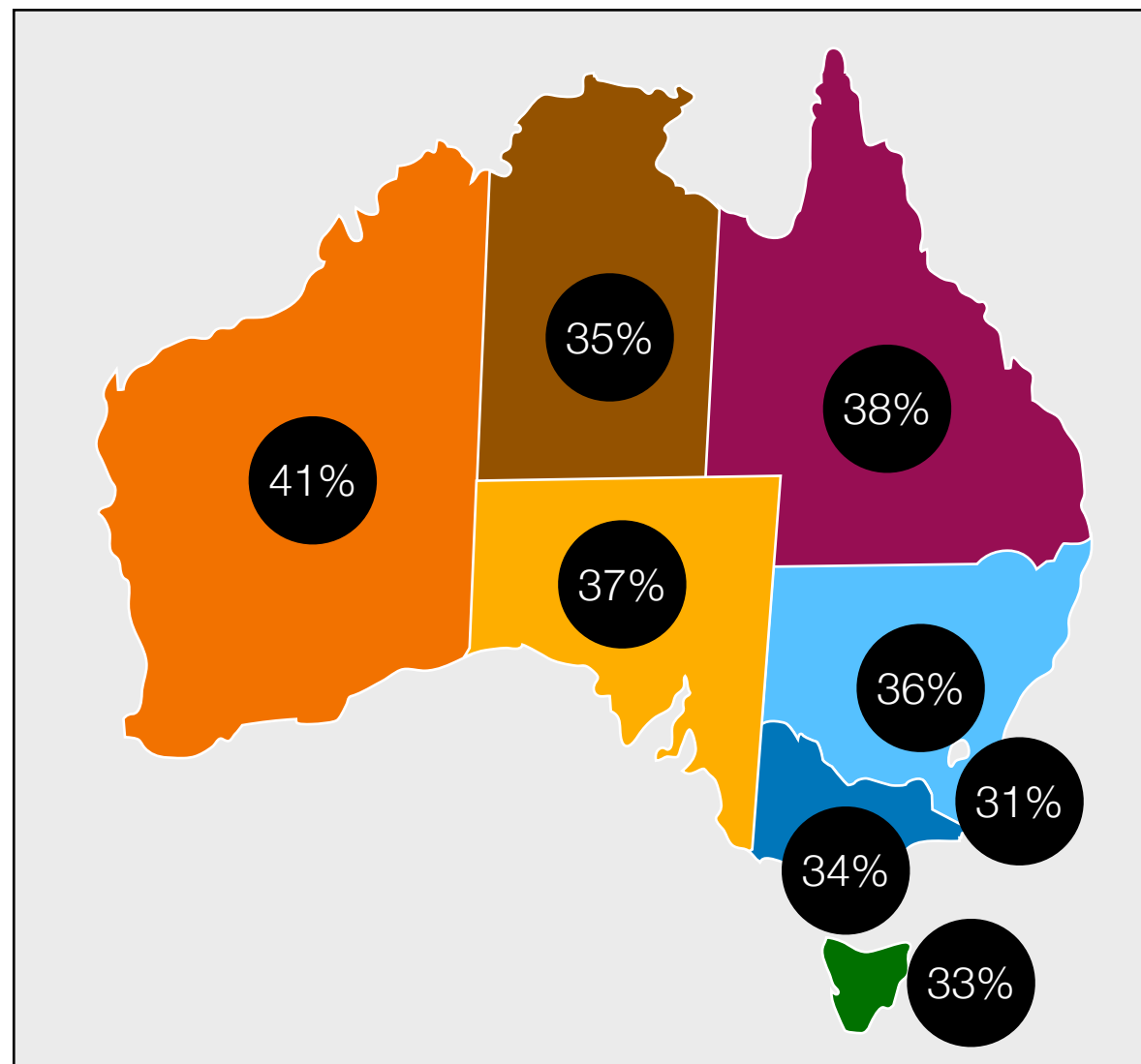
- Highest amongst:
 - Doesn't work/Home (41%)
 - Self-employed (39%)
- Lowest amongst:
 - Independent Professional (30%)
 - Business Owner (33%)

Education

- Higher amongst:
 - School Certificate (41%)
 - Apprenticeship (39%)
 - Technical/Trade Cert (38%)
- Lower amongst:
 - Postgraduate (32%)
 - Undergraduate (34%)

Relationship Status

- Highest amongst:
 - Single (42%)
 - Divorced (40%)
- Lowest amongst:
 - Married (34%)
 - Partnered (35%)



26% have been exposed to Influenza vaccination anti-vaxer sentiment

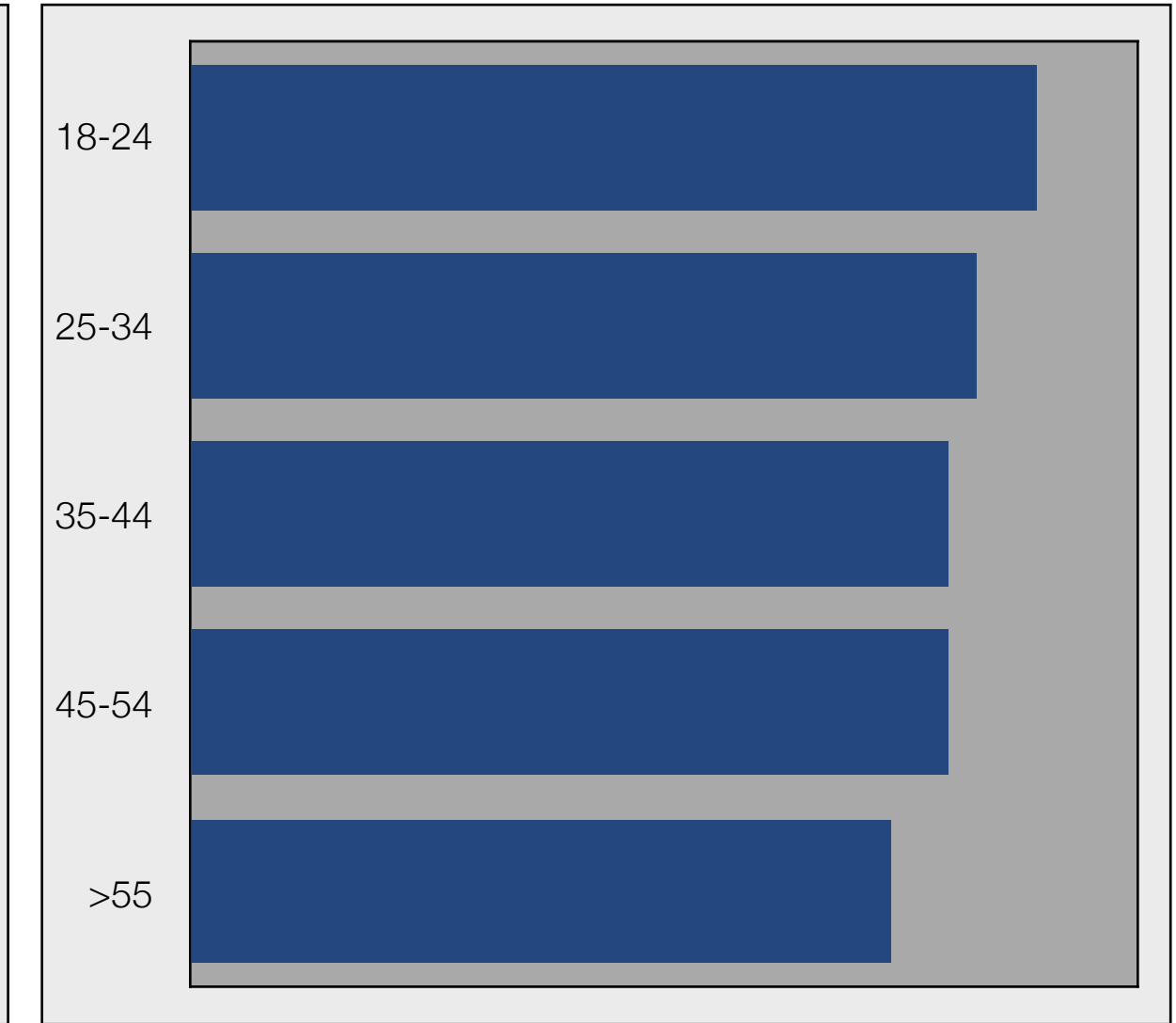
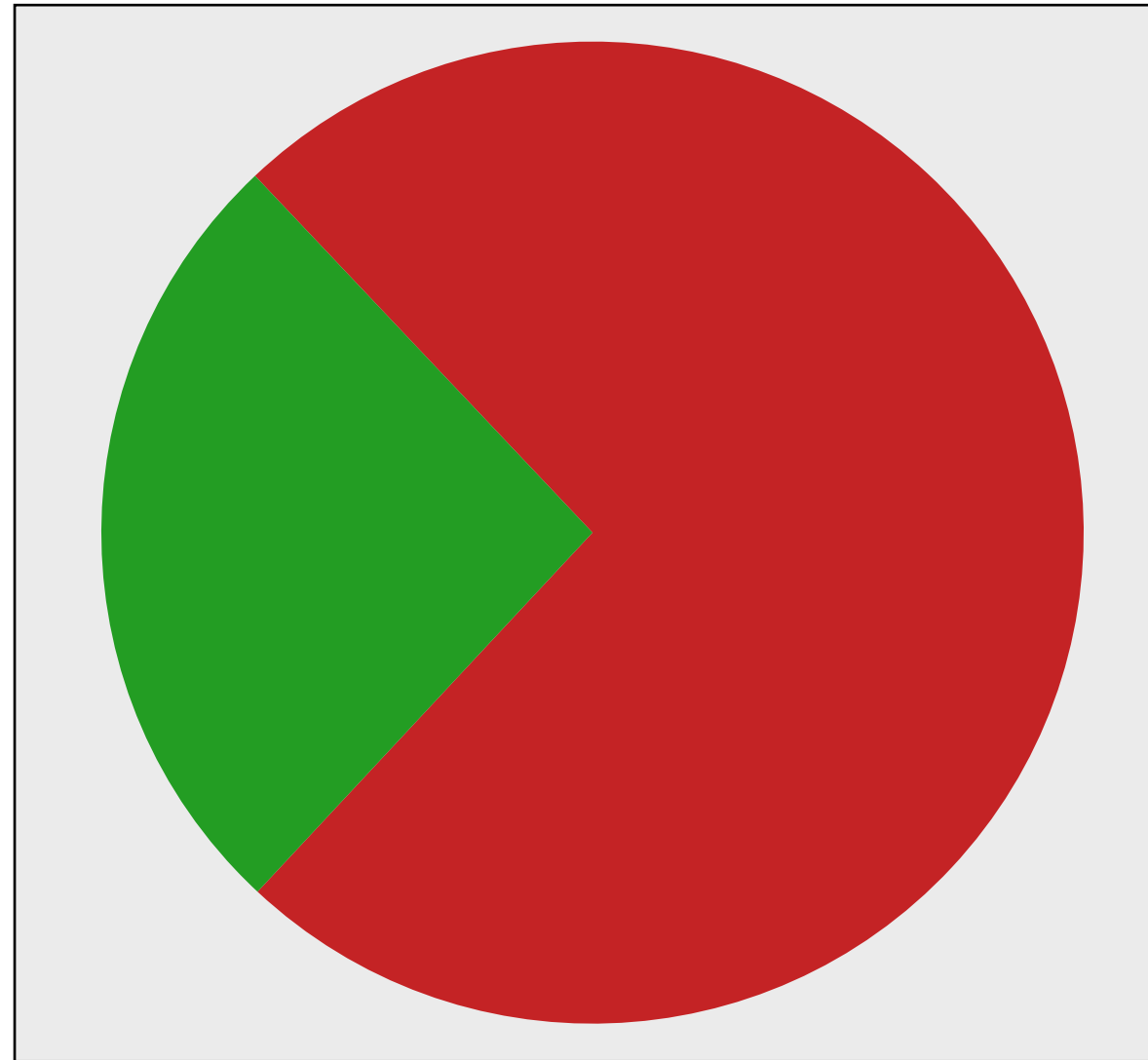
12. Have you been exposed to anti-vaxer sentiment concerning Influenza vaccination for your child/children?

26% have been exposed to Influenza vaccination anti-vaxer sentiment

- Illustrated in the opposite, top chart, 26% answered 'Yes' & 74% 'No'.

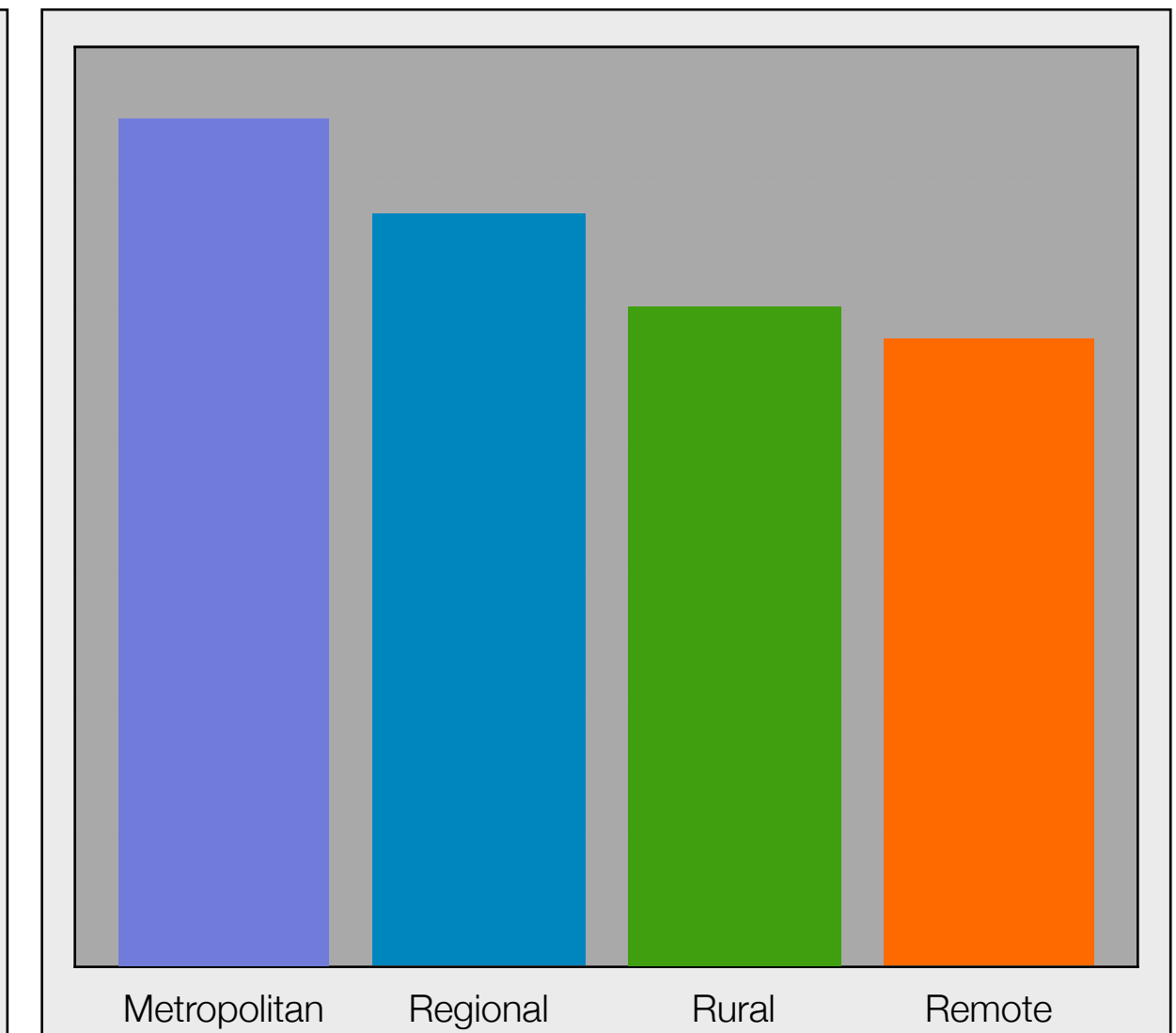
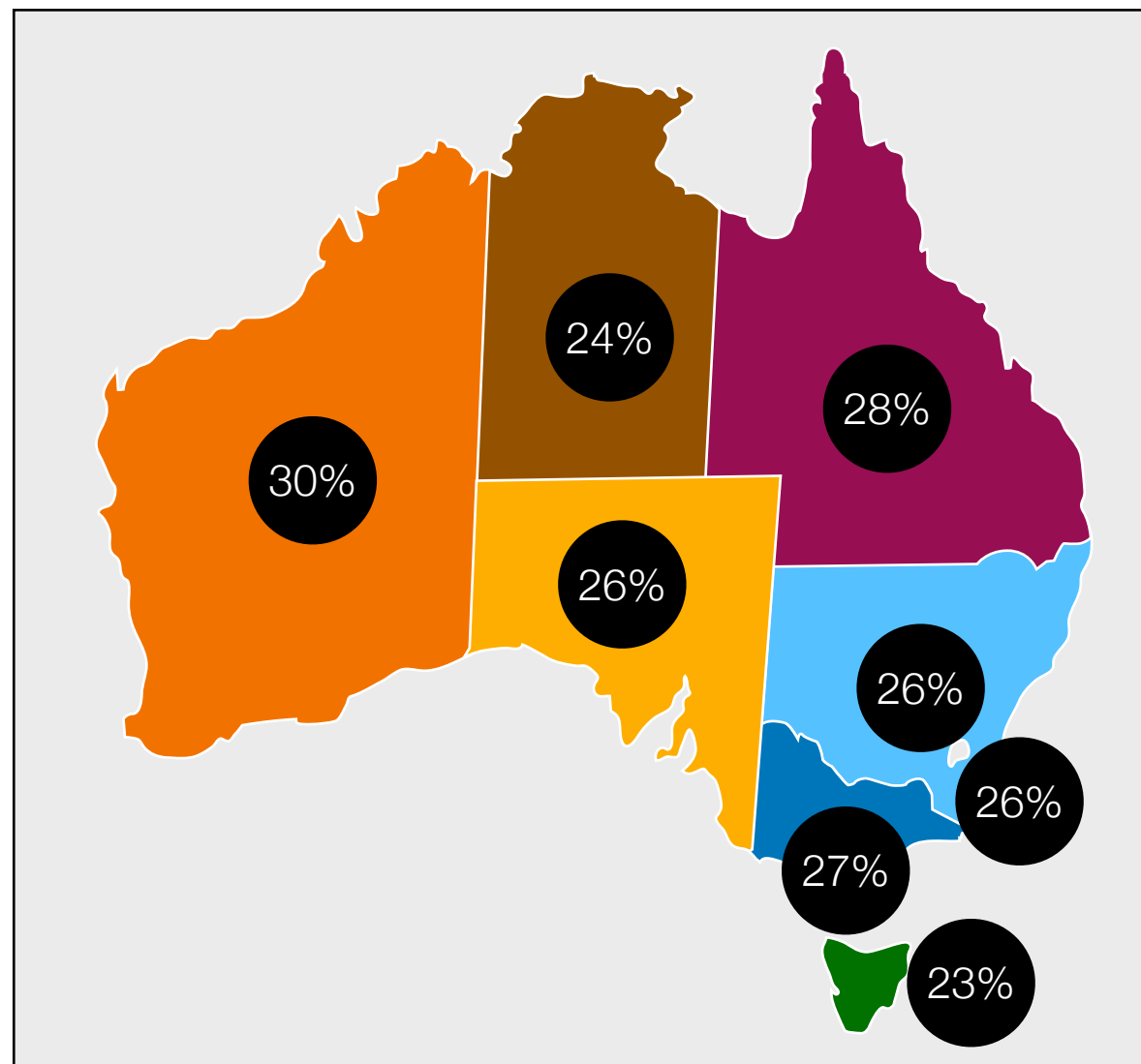
Relationship status, occupation & education the main determinants

- The main determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes', were relationship status, occupation & education, summarised in the table below.
- All other demographic, geographic & socio-economic factors were also determinants with noticeable variation amongst those who answered 'Yes'.



Determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes'

Age	Gender	State/Territory	Geographic Area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slightly higher amongst younger parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18-24 (29%) - 25-34 (27%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women 29% - Men 23% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest amongst those from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WA (30%) - QLD (28%) • Lowest amongst those from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TAS (23%) - NT (24%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst those from metropolitan areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Metropolitan (27%) - Regional (24%) - Rural (21%) - Remote (20%)
Household Income	Occupation	Education	Relationship Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst middle-lower income households: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$75-\$99k (31%) - \$100-124k (30%) • Lower amongst high-income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$225-\$249k (22%) - >\$250+ (23%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doesn't work/Home (32%) - Self-employed (31%) • Lowest amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent Professional (22%) - Business Owner (24%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apprenticeship (32%) - School Certificate (30%) • Lower amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Postgraduate (23%) - Undergraduate (25%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single (34%) - Partnered (30%) • Lower amongst: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Divorced (24%) - Separated (25%)



Natural for children to have Influenza & less harmful than vaccination

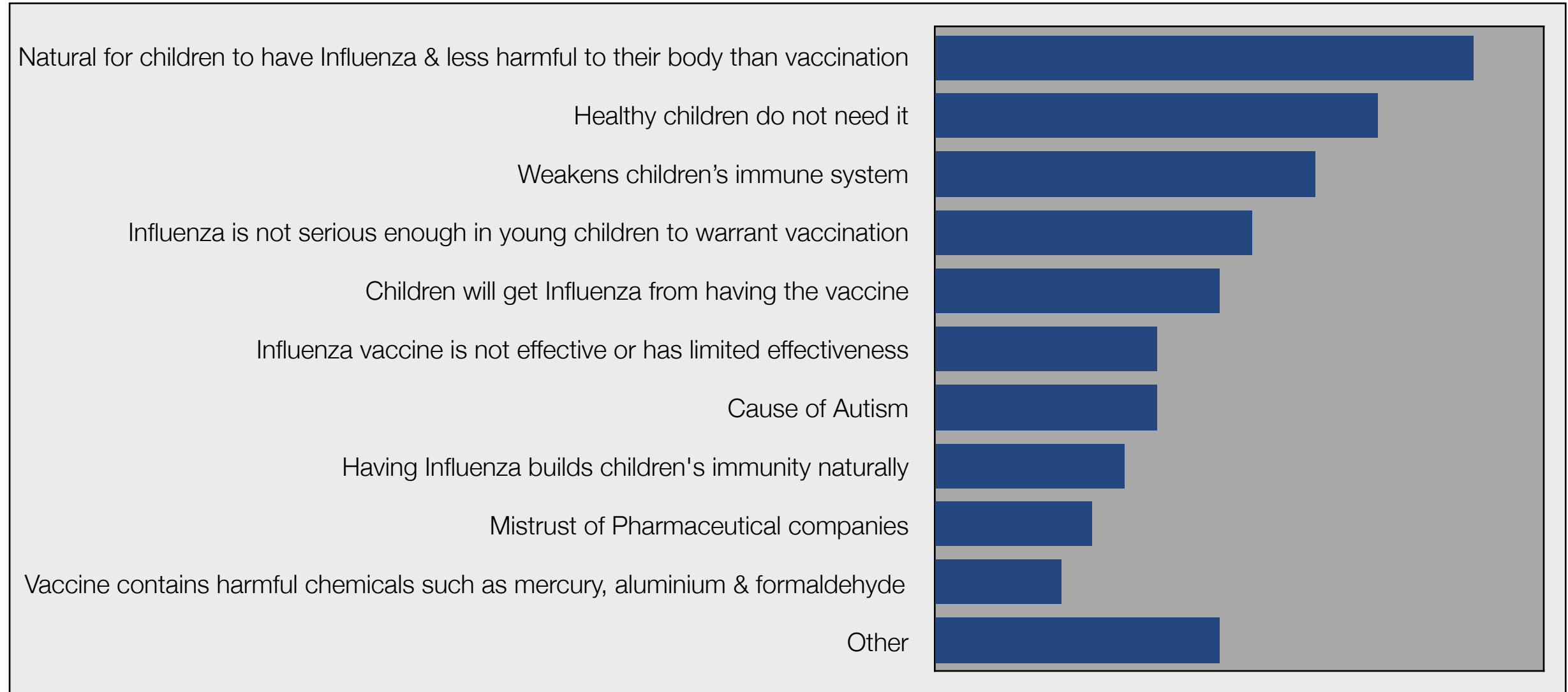
13. Can you describe what was the anti-vaxer sentiment you have been exposed to?

Natural for children to have Influenza & less harmful than vaccination

- There were many similar responses to misinformation that parents had been exposed to, in addition to several stronger and more extreme opinions and beliefs.
- The main response was ‘Natural for children to have Influenza & less harmful to their body than vaccination’ which accounted for 17% of overall responses.
- The other main anti-vaxer sentiments exposed to were:
 - ‘Healthy children do not need it’ (14%)
 - ‘Weakens children’s immune system’ (12%)
 - ‘Influenza is not serious enough to warrant vaccination’ (10%)
 - ‘Children will get Influenza from having the vaccine’ (9%)
 - ‘Influenza vaccine is not effective or has limited effectiveness’ (7%)
 - ‘Cause of Autism’ (7%)
 - ‘Having Influenza builds children’s immunity naturally’ (6%)
 - ‘Mistrust of Pharmaceutical companies’ (5%)
 - ‘Vaccine contains harmful chemicals such as mercury, aluminium & formaldehyde’ (4%)
 - 9% answered ‘Other’ and stated the anti-vaxer sentiment they have been exposed to

Stronger and more extreme opinions & beliefs than misinformation

- The opinions and beliefs that formed much of the anti-vaxer sentiment, were stronger and more extreme than those pertaining to misinformation, such as:
 - Autism
 - ▶ Misinformation was that the Influenza vaccine was linked to Autism
 - ▶ Anti-vaxer sentiment was that the vaccine was a cause of Autism
 - Contracting Influenza from the vaccine
 - ▶ Misinformation was children may get Influenza from having the vaccine
 - ▶ Anti-vaxer sentiment was that children will get Influenza from having the vaccine



Other reasons given

- 9% responded ‘Other’ and specified what they have been exposed to, the main being:
 - Influenza is less harmful to a child than the Influenza vaccine, this accounted for around 20% of all ‘Other’ responses
 - Mistrust of governments pushing vaccination (around 15%)
 - Risks of the vaccine outweigh the benefits (around 10%)
 - Vaccination does not provide benefit if a child had Influenza in last 6-12 months (around 10%)
 - Contains laboratory-made strains of Influenza which are harmful (around 10%)
 - Long-term effects are a cause of concern (around 10%)
 - Adverse side effects prove it is not safe (around 5%)
 - Linked to cardiac problems (around 5%)
 - Influenza vaccine is especially harmful to babies and toddlers (around 5%)

Social media dominates, accounting for 45% of anti-vaxer sentiment

14. What was the source of the anti-vaxer sentiment?

Social media dominates, accounting for 45% of anti-vaxer sentiment

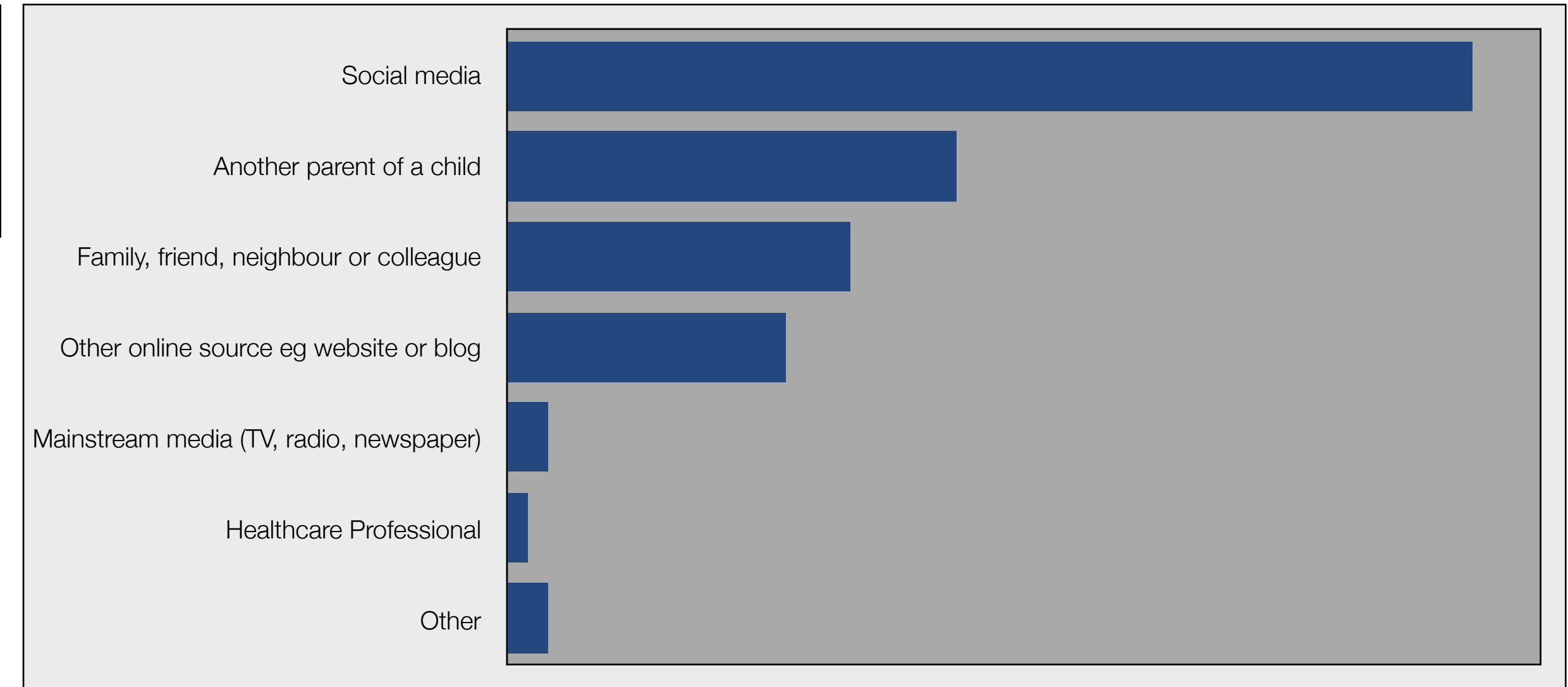
- Illustrated in the chart opposite:
 - The highest response by far was 'Social media' which accounted for 45% of responses
 - 'Another parent of a child' (21%)
 - 'Family, friend, neighbour or colleague' (16%)
 - 'Other online source eg, website or blog' (13%)
 - 'Mainstream media (TV, radio, newspaper)' (2%)
 - 'Healthcare Professional' (1%)
 - 2% answered 'Other' and stated their sources, with most being an online source or a personal interaction often with someone know to them, such as a hairdresser, employee/ staff in a store, other than member of a gym or sport/leisure/hobby club or association

Variation across the sources of anti-vaxer sentiment

- Across the demographic, geographic & socio-economic factors, the main variations were where women had higher responses than men relating to:
 - 'Social media' women (48%), men (41%)
 - 'Another parent of a child' women (24%), men (18%)
 - 'Family, friend, neighbour or colleague' women (19%), men (13%)

Specific sources of anti-vaxer sentiment

- In a sub-question, respondents were asked to specify the specific sources of anti-vaxer sentiment they were exposed to, for several of the main categories, summarised in the table opposite.



Specific sources of anti-vaxer sentiment

Social Media	Other Online Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook (32%) • X (Twitter) (16%) • TikTok (15%) • Instagram (13%) • Reddit (11%) • YouTube (7%) • Podcasts (5%) • Douyin (<1%) • WeChat (<1%) • Weibo (<1%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites (7%) • Forums & Communities (non-social media) (3%) • Blogs (3%)
Mainstream Media	Healthcare Professionals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio (1%) • Magazines (<1%) • Newspapers (<1%) • TV (<1%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main Healthcare Professionals stated were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Midwife (<1%) - Pharmacist (<1%) • Allied Health Professionals made up the remainder, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Naturopaths - Chiropractors - Osteopaths - Dieticians & Nutritionists - Physiotherapists

24% influenced not to vaccinate against Influenza due to anti-vaxer

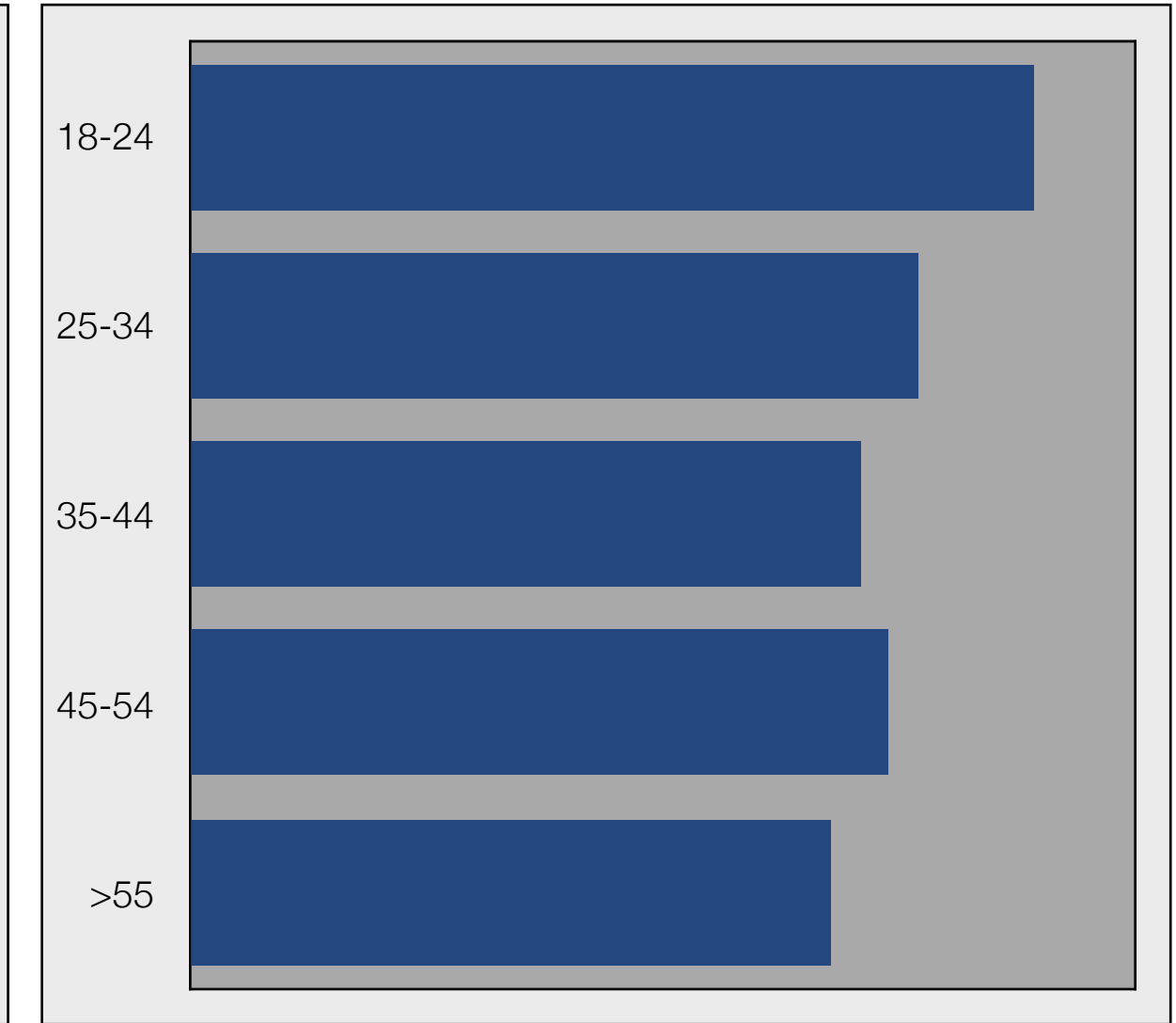
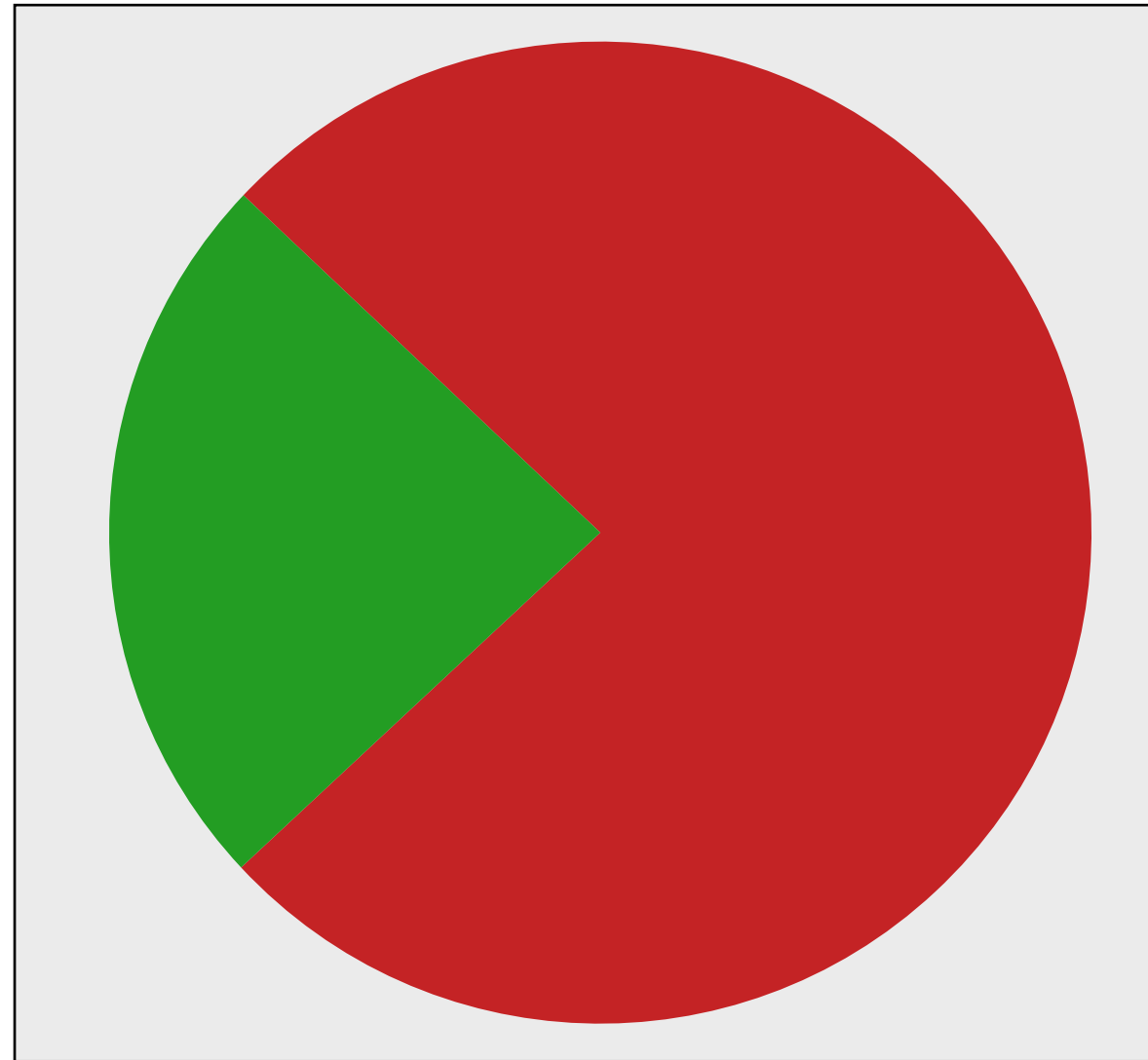
15. Has this anti-vaxer sentiment influenced your decision not to vaccinate your child/children against Influenza?

24% influenced not to vaccinate against Influenza due to anti-vaxer

- Illustrated in the opposite, top chart, 24% answered 'Yes' & 76% 'No'.

Occupation, household income & education main determinants

- The main determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes', were occupation, household income & education, summarised in the table below.
- All other demographic, geographic & socio-economic factors were also determinants with noticeable variation amongst those who answered 'Yes'.



Determinants amongst those who answered 'Yes'

Age

- Higher amongst younger parents:
 - 18-24 (29%)
 - 25-34 (25%)
- Lowest amongst those aged:
 - >55 (22%)
 - 35-44 (23%)

Gender

- The same amongst gender:
 - Women 24%
 - Men 24%

State/Territory

- Highest amongst those from:
 - WA (28%)
 - SA (27%)
 - QLD (26%)
- Lowest amongst those from:
 - ACT (21%)
 - TAS (22%)

Geographic Area

- Slightly higher amongst those from metropolitan areas:
 - Metropolitan (25%)
 - Regional (23%)
 - Rural (22%)
 - Remote (19%)

Household Income

- Slightly higher amongst lower-middle income households:
 - \$150-\$174k (28%)
 - \$125-149k (26%)
- Lowest amongst:
 - <\$250k (21%)
 - \$200-\$224k (23%)

Occupation

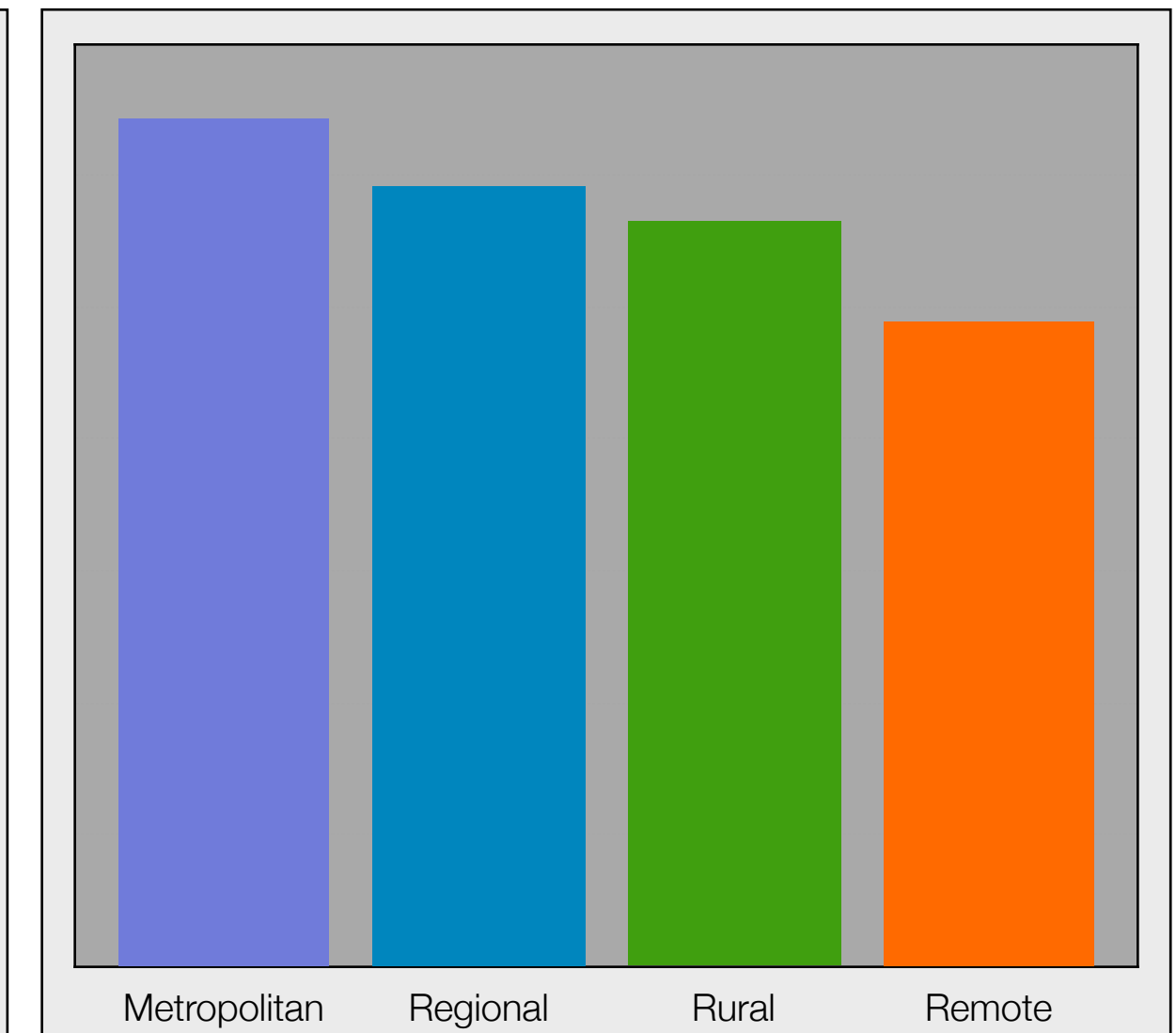
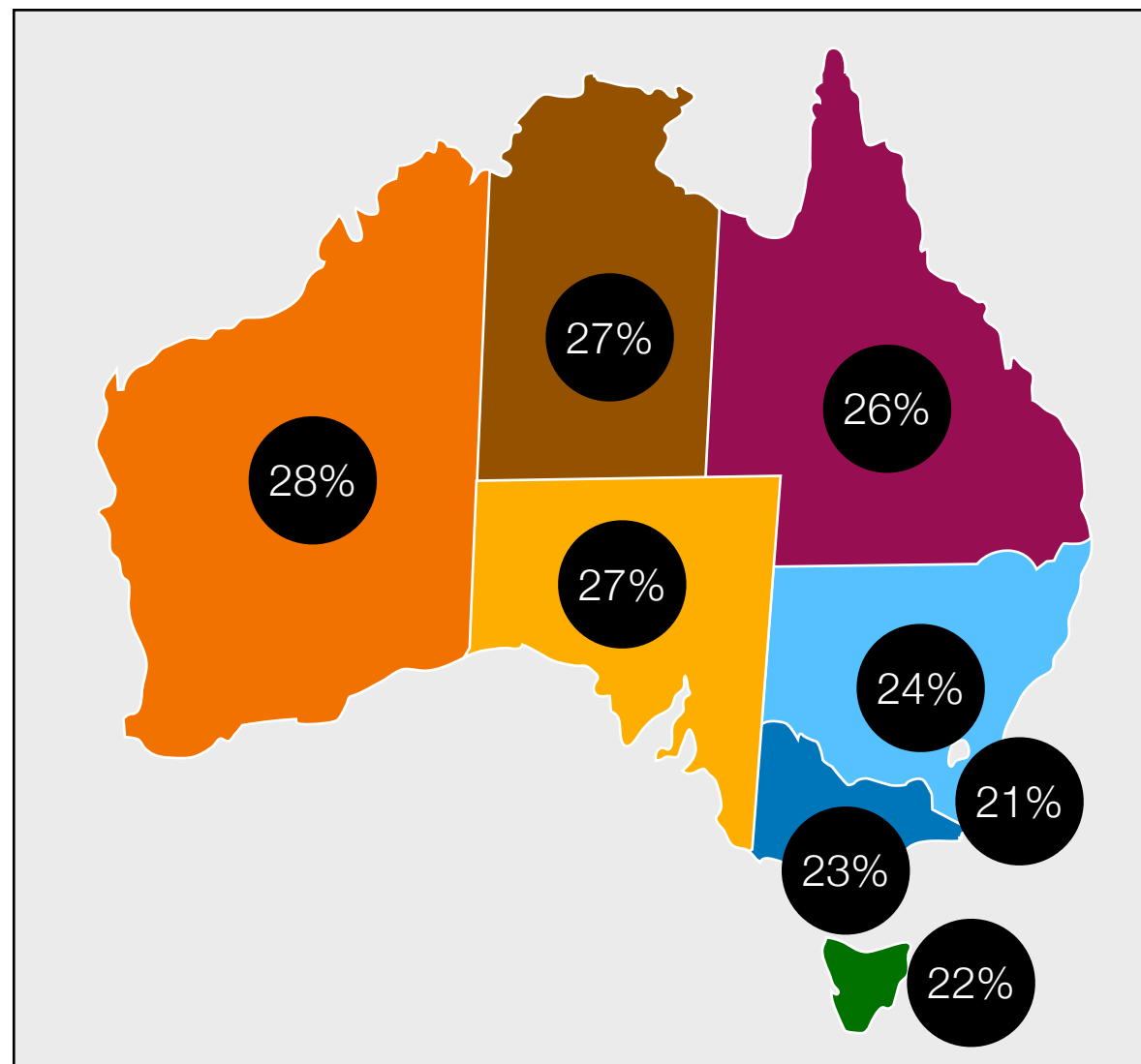
- Highest amongst:
 - Doesn't work/Home (28%)
 - Employed (Part-Time/Casual) (26%)
- Lowest amongst:
 - Independent Professional (20%)

Education

- Higher amongst:
 - Apprenticeship (27%)
 - School Certificate (26%)
 - Technical/Trade Cert (26%)
- Lower amongst:
 - Postgraduate (22%)
 - Undergraduate (22%)

Relationship Status

- Highest amongst:
 - Single (28%)
 - Divorced (26%)
- Lowest amongst:
 - Married (23%)
 - Partnered (24%)



All other infectious diseases higher importance for vaccination than Influenza

16. How would you rank other infectious diseases in terms of vaccination importance, against Influenza, for your child/ children, aged under 5 years?

All other infectious diseases higher importance for vaccination than Influenza

- Across the infectious diseases, all were given a higher rank in terms of vaccination importance, against Influenza.

Polio given the highest importance for vaccination

- By far, Polio was given the highest importance for vaccination against Influenza:
 - 'Much Higher' (92%), 'Somewhat Higher' (7%) & 'Same' (1%)

Meningococcal Disease & Hepatitis B

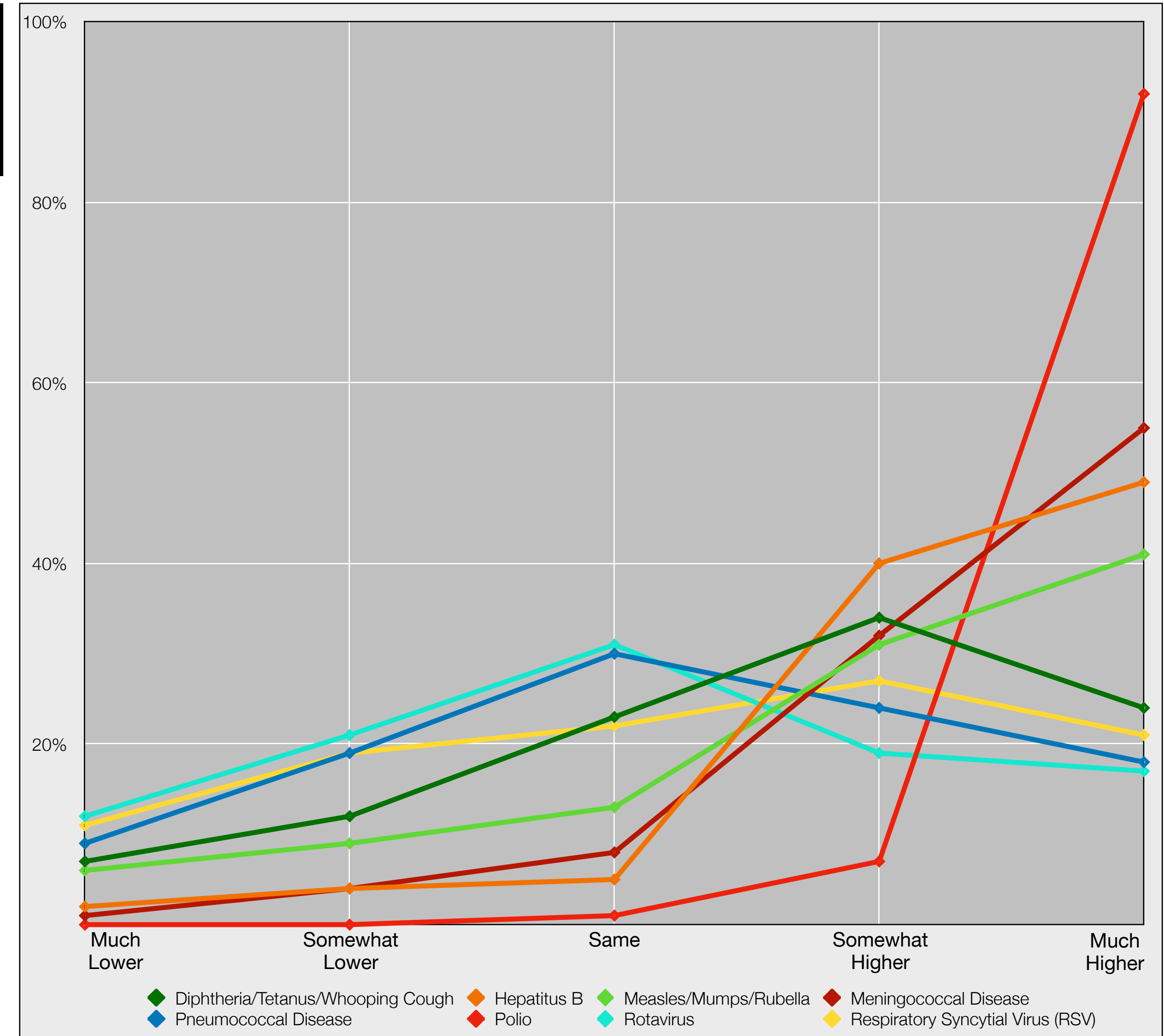
- After Polio, the next importance was given to:
 - Meningococcal Disease: 'Much Higher' (55%), 'Somewhat Higher' (32%) & 'Same' (8%)
 - Hepatitis B: 'Much Higher' (49%), 'Somewhat Higher' (40%) & 'Same' (5%)

Measles/Mumps/Rubella & Diphtheria/Tetanus/Whooping Cough

- The next importance was given to:
 - Measles/Mumps/Rubella: 'Much Higher' (41%), 'Somewhat Higher' (31%) & 'Same' (13%)
 - Diphtheria/Tetanus/Whooping Cough: 'Much Higher' (24%), 'Somewhat Higher' (34%) & 'Same' (23%)

RSV, Pneumococcal Disease & Rotavirus

- The least importance, though still higher than Influenza, was given to:
 - RSV: 'Much Higher' (21%), 'Somewhat Higher' (27%) & 'Same' (22%)
 - Pneumococcal Disease: 'Much Higher' (18%), 'Somewhat Higher' (24%) & 'Same' (30%)
 - Rotavirus: 'Much Higher' (17%), 'Somewhat Higher' (19%) & 'Same' (31%)



22% of parents were vaccinated against Influenza this year

17. As a parent, were you (and your partner) vaccinated against Influenza this year?

22% of parents were vaccinated against Influenza this year

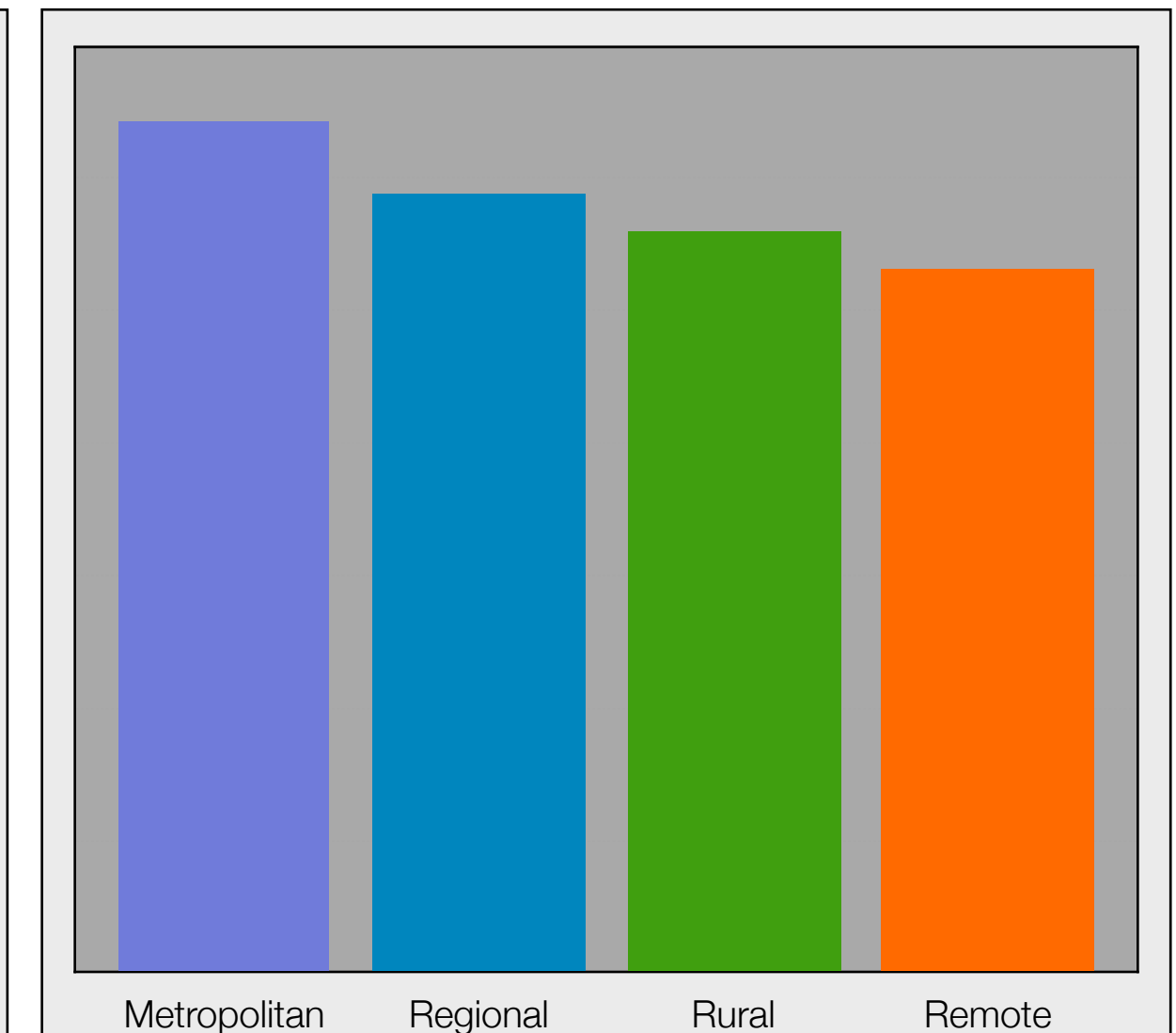
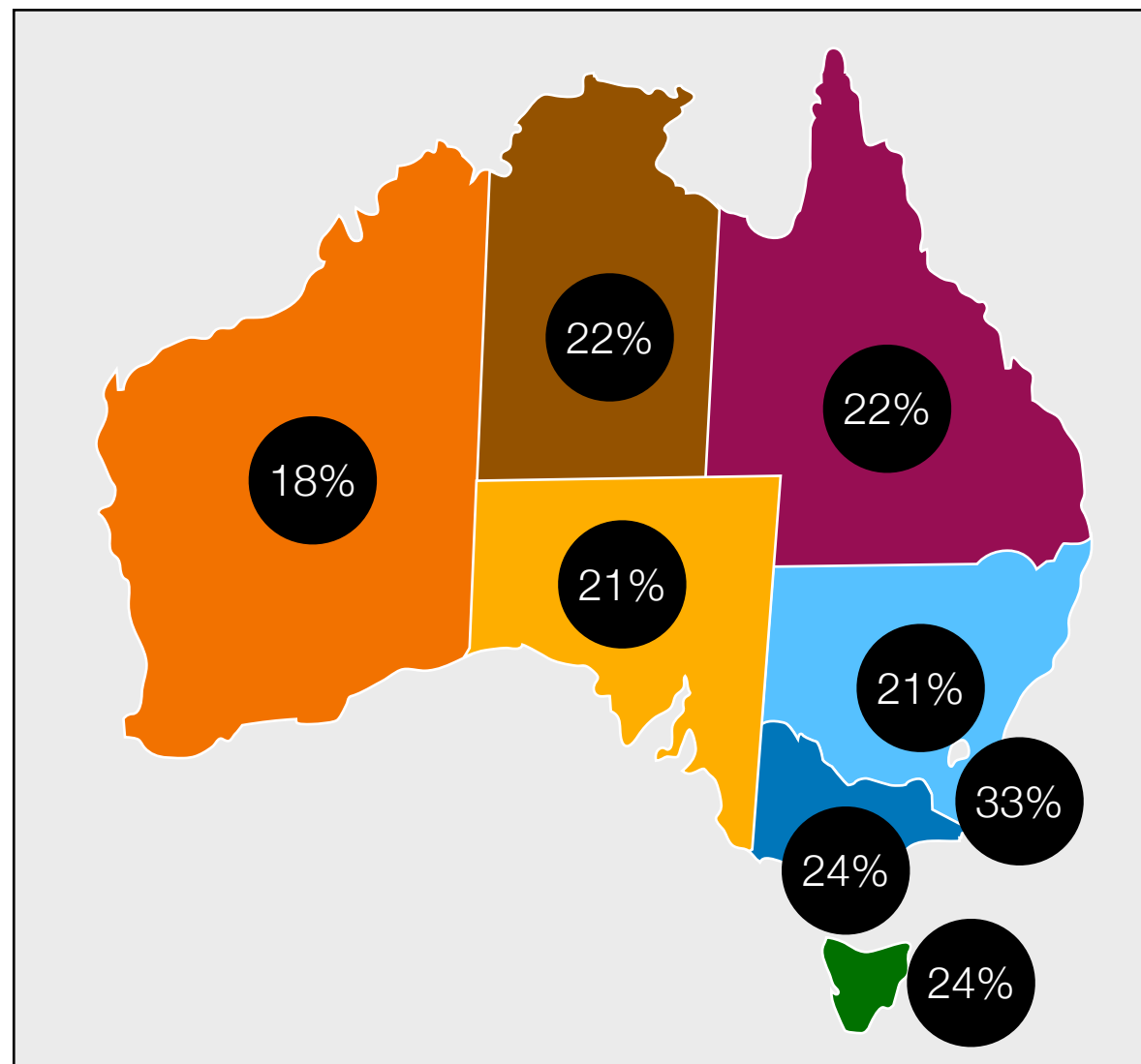
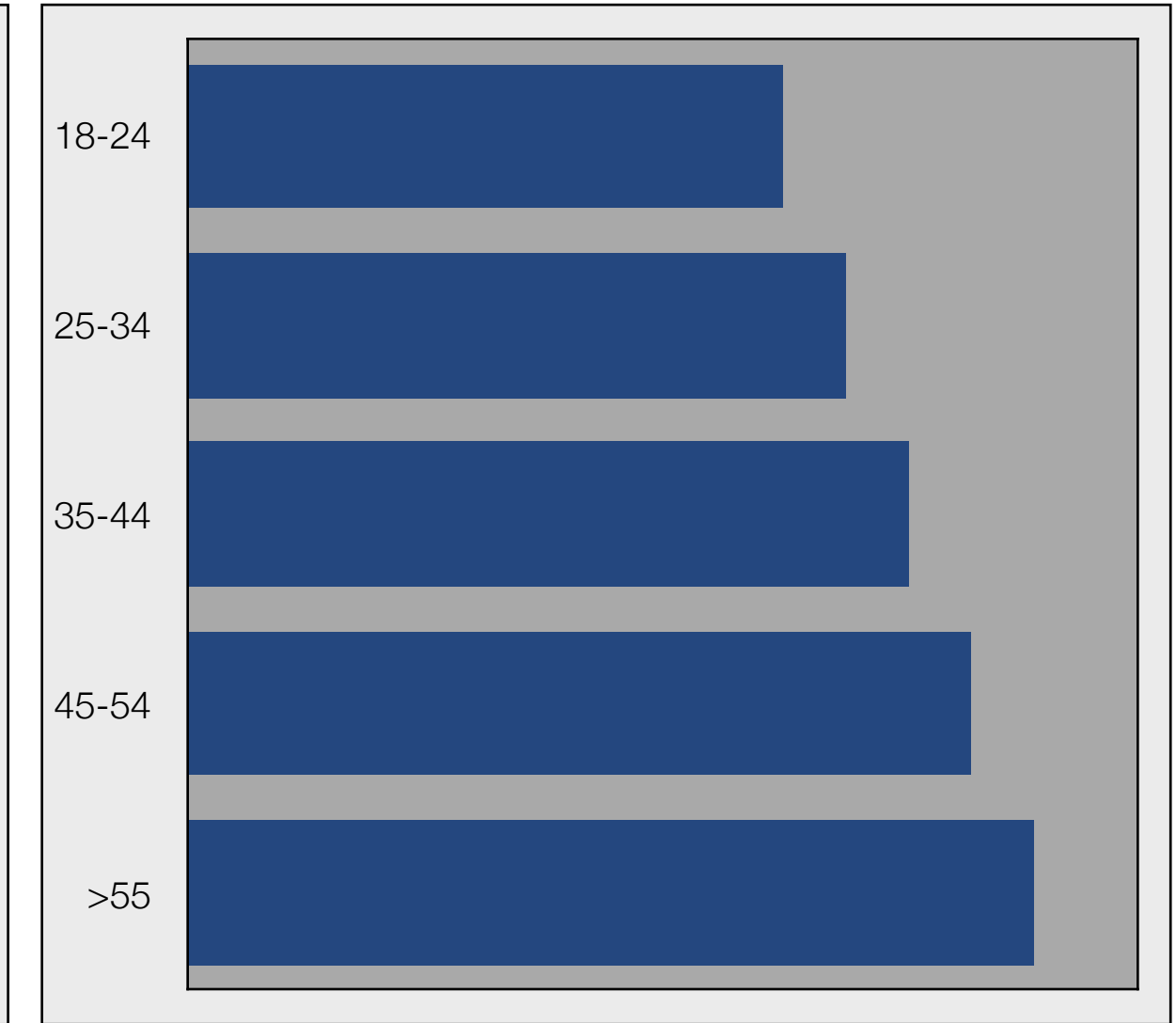
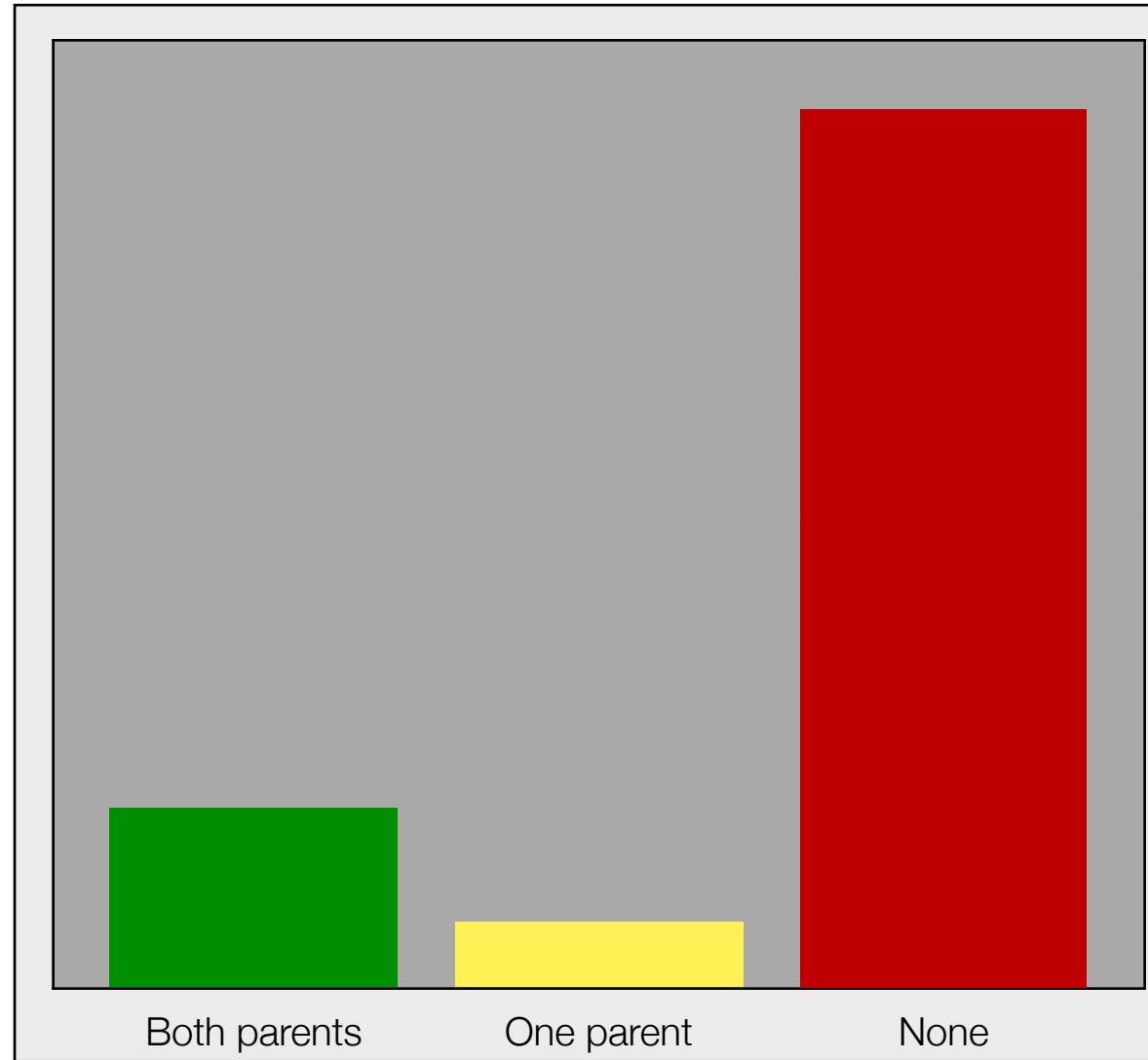
- Illustrated in the opposite, top chart:
 - 22% of parents were vaccinated against Influenza this year, apportioned:
 - Both parents (16%)
 - One parent (6%)

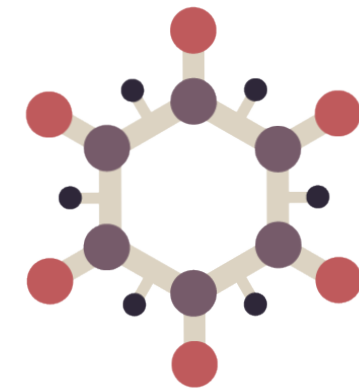
Geographic location, age & gender the main determinants

- Geographic location was the main determining factor in one or both parents being vaccinated against Influenza this year, in particular across the States and Territories where:
 - ACT (33%) had the highest percentage of one or both parents being vaccinated, followed by VIC & TAS (24%), with WA having the lowest (18%)
 - Those in metropolitan areas also had a higher incidence than regional, rural & remote areas
- Age was a determining factor amongst those who were vaccinated, with a higher incidence amongst those who were vaccinated that increased with age.
- Gender was also a determining factor, with 24% of women being vaccinated this year, compared to 19% of men.

Correlation between children & parents being vaccinated this year

- A correlation was found between children being vaccinated and their parents being vaccinated against Influenza this year, specifically:
 - 21% of the children who were vaccinated, had one or both parents vaccinated against Influenza this year





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