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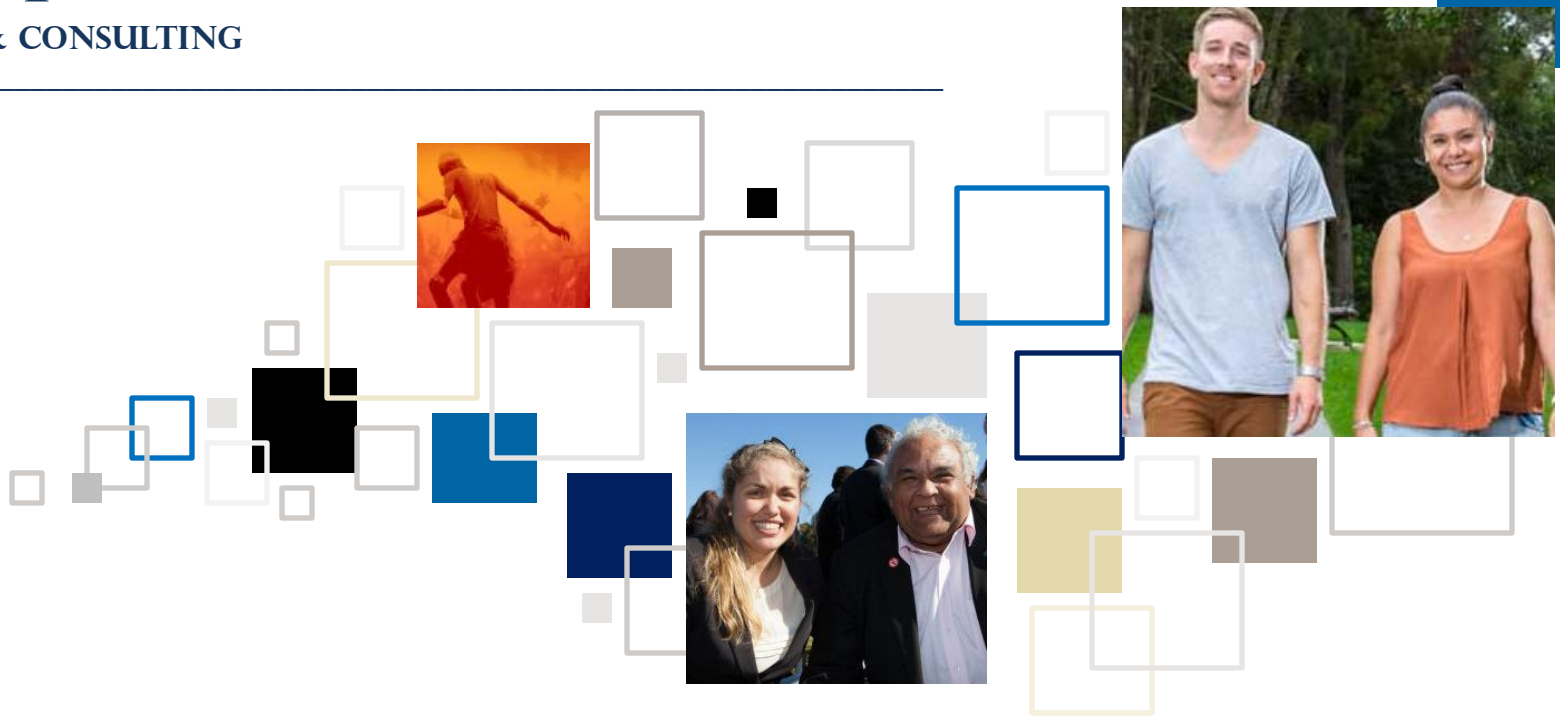

Australian Reconciliation Barometer 2014

Darryl Nelson
Managing Director
Polity Pty. Ltd.
darryl@polityresearch.com.au

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Reconciliation AUSTRALIA

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Introduction & background

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Reconciliation Australia (RA) first launched the Reconciliation Barometer research project in February 2007. The objective of the research was to develop a tool to measure the progress of reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians. The first study was completed in 2008, with subsequent biennial tracking waves in 2010 and 2012.

While improvements in Indigenous health, employment, housing and education are essential for the reconciliation process, equally important, and at the core of reconciliation, is the relationship between the first Australians and those who have come since.

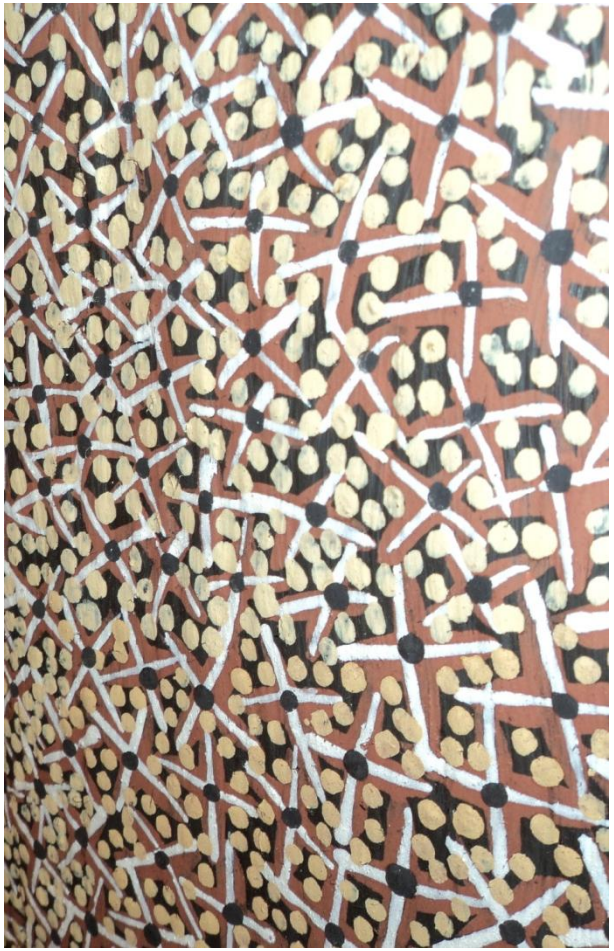
If we are to improve the relationship and create an environment which provides equal life chances for all Australians we must also measure, track and understand the underlying values and perceptions that shape this relationship and influence our social interactions and structures.

This is the only study of this nature undertaken in Australia. The inspiration for the Barometer came from South Africa, where the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation developed the '*South African Reconciliation Barometer*'. Initially it was conducted bi-annually in 2003 and 2004 and since then annually.

The Australian Reconciliation Barometer delves into the heart of our nation to identify the attitudes Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians hold about each other, and about reconciliation in this country. It also attempts to shed some light on opportunities for moving the relationship forward towards a greater reconciled, shared unity.

For this latest 2014 Barometer, RA has aligned the survey more closely with its Reconciliation Outcomes Framework, to focus on 4 of the 5 key dimensions:

- Race Relations, Unity, Material Equality and Historical Acceptance



Methodology 2008-12 Barometers

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Original ARB development

To create the first Australian Reconciliation Barometer, the first part of the research task was to identify different factors that contributed to advancing reconciliation. Several phases of both quantitative and qualitative research were used in the process of identifying and defining these factors. In May 2007 RA commissioned a quantitative survey among 1,024 people to determine the underlying values of Australians towards Indigenous issues and reconciliation. This survey was further enhanced by a series of in-depth interviews with 14 key Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders. From this, 29 hypotheses of reconciliation were identified, forming the basis of a discussion guide for further study.

In November-December 2007, a series of 12 forums were conducted with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in Shepparton, Rockhampton and Sydney. The forums explored the 29 hypotheses of reconciliation and this resulted in the development of 31 "outcomes" for reconciliation, that is actions or conditions that will advance reconciliation.

These outcomes were used to inform the development of the original Barometer questionnaire. The same questionnaire was used in surveys of Indigenous Australians as well as the general community, to allow a direct comparison between the attitudes of the two groups. This first Barometer survey was conducted in May 2008, May 2010 and July 2012.

General Community Sample

For the 2008-2012 studies, the general community sample of Australians was selected and weighted to be representative in terms of age, gender and location (state and urban/regional splits), as per Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census data. Participants were recruited from a professional market and social research panel and they received a small incentive for their participation.

1007 Australian residents aged 18+ completed the survey in May 2008, 1220 completed the survey in April 2010, and 1012 completed the survey in July 2012. These sample sizes are associated with margins of error of +/- 3.1%, +/- 2.8% and +/-3.1% at the 95% confidence interval respectively.

Indigenous Sample

The 2008-2012 surveys among Indigenous respondents involved recruitment through Indigenous networks across Australia, with an open invitation distributed by email and hosted on the RA website. This targeted approach was taken due to the relatively small proportion of Indigenous Australians within established research panels, and the Australian population overall. A sample of 617 Indigenous Australians completed the survey between 25th-30th June 2008, while 704 Indigenous Australians completed it in 12th-29th April, 2010, and 516 completed it in July 2012. These sample sizes are associated with margins of error of +/- 4%, +/- 3.7% and +/- 4.3% respectively.

Gaining a truly representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is difficult because of a number of geographical and socioeconomic factors. Accounting for these factors was beyond the scope of the research, and it was acknowledged that the sample of Indigenous people (recruited via Indigenous networks) may not have been truly representative of the overall Indigenous population. The data was weighted according to Indigenous demographic data (age/gender and location) from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census, to try and ensure it was as representative as possible.

Methodology 2014 Barometer

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ARB reviewed and refined

In early 2014, following a tender process, Polity Research & Consulting was selected to conduct the ARB survey, and to assist RA and its stakeholders with a comprehensive review of the Barometer survey. In May 2014, RA convened a Roundtable workshop at the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence in Redfern. Participants were invited based on their knowledge and experience in Indigenous affairs, reconciliation and social research, and to achieve an appropriate mix of not-for-profit, academic and commercial sectors and gender.

The Roundtable identified 4 key areas for improvement of the ARB:

i. To better inform a broader narrative on reconciliation, by more closely aligning with RA's Reconciliation Outcomes Framework

ii. To remove questionnaire asymmetry, with too many existing questions 'speaking' to non-Indigenous respondents rather than both groups

iii. To address Indigenous sample bias, as much as logistically possible, with respondents drawn from a narrow group of Indigenous networks

iv. To measure the 'lived experience' of respondents more, rather than their perceptions of the broader social reality

Accordingly, this latest Barometer has been revised extensively and contains many new measures, as well as some revisions to past questions. For this reason and also due to the improved 'random' sampling approach for the Indigenous community (see below), the 2014 ARB represents something of a resetting of the reconciliation baseline in Australia, and makes direct tracking comparisons with 2008-2012 results difficult.

Nevertheless, the results of these past surveys have, where applicable, been included in the Barometer reported in full in this report. This allows for possible trend analysis by readers of this report, however Polity advises caution regarding any dramatic changes in results from 2012.

General Community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Samples

The general community sample of Australian residents continues to be selected and weighted to be representative in terms of age, gender and location (state and urban/regional splits), as per Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census data. Participants were recruited from a professional market and social research panel and they received a small incentive for their participation. The sample of 1100 completed the survey in Sept-Oct 2014, and is associated with a margin of error of +/-3.1% at the 95% confidence interval.

For the first time, the Indigenous sample was also drawn from a professional market and social research panel. Participants were 'self-identified' as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The sample of 502 completed the survey in Sept-Oct 2014 (simultaneously with the general community sample), and is associated with a margin of error of +/-4.4% at the 95% confidence interval.

Further details of the composition of both samples are provided in the Appendix.

Methodology 2014 Barometer

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Acknowledged limitations

Gaining a truly representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians remains difficult because of a number of geographical and socioeconomic factors. Accounting for these factors comprehensively is beyond the current budget scope of the research, and as such the sample of Indigenous people may not be truly representative of the overall Indigenous population (particularly encompassing remote community views).

For demographic profiling, the survey asked questions regarding cultural backgrounds, including personal cultural background for non-Indigenous participants. It is acknowledged that in the course of survey objectives and brevity, this covered only macro-level major cultural groups (i.e. European or Asian), but did not cover 'National' identities (e.g. Australian, Indonesian, etc).

It is further acknowledged that, in the interests of graphical and reporting brevity, the abbreviation *Indigenous* has been used in this report, to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Similarly, the term "Australians" has been used in both the survey questions and report, to refer to all people who are resident in Australia, including both citizens and non-citizens.

Online approach

Participants from both groups completed the survey online. Previous studies have shown that online research produces research which is at least as accurate (and sometimes more accurate) than telephone research. Another benefit of this approach is the removal of any interviewer bias that may come into play when discussing sensitive issues. Online surveys also have the advantage of allowing people to respond at their own pace, giving them enough time to properly consider important and complex issues.

However, it is possible that this methodology over-samples the computer literate population which on average may be more highly educated than the general population.

Australian Reconciliation Barometer 2014 Insights

Key findings and trends analysis

The social context of changing attitudes

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Before interpreting any changes in the survey results between 2008 and 2014, it is worthwhile examining how the broader social, political, and economic environment has changed in Australia during this period. There have been some important changes in the last 6 years and these may have influenced our attitudes to reconciliation and other Indigenous issues.

The Apology to the Stolen Generation

There were two "Indigenous events", which were prominent at the time of the first Barometer, but have since become less visible as major issues in the media and the political debate. The first of these was the Federal Government's Apology to the Stolen Generation in February 2008. This event acknowledged and brought attention to the impact of past government policies on Indigenous Australians. It was generally well received by the broader community, as well as Indigenous people, with the latter typically seeing it as a crucial step towards building better relations between the groups. As such, the apology brought attention to the issue of reconciliation in a positive way that set an optimistic tone for the future.

The Northern Territory Intervention

The other major event occurring around the time of the first Barometer was the Northern Territory Intervention which began in late 2007. As with the Apology it generated significant media attention, but this time it was mostly focussed around negative portrayals of Indigenous people associated with themes of abuse, disadvantage and neglect. Although supported by both sides of politics, the intervention was controversial, with Indigenous people and other Australians divided on its merits.

In the time since these two events, there has generally been less attention given to Indigenous issues in the media, and there has also been a drop in the political salience of Indigenous issues compared to other concerns.

The Global Financial Crisis

On a broader level there has also been a major change in the global financial environment and this has affected the importance that Australians ascribe to various issues. Concern over the Global Financial Crisis peaked around 2009 and continues to affect sentiment today. At a broad level the GFC has been associated with a general shift in the public mood, from one of prosperity to one of uncertainty and guarded optimism. Other public indicators have shown that over this period Australians have become relatively more concerned about job security and their financial stability and relatively less concerned with "non-financial issues" such as the environment or Indigenous reconciliation.

Campaign for Constitutional Recognition

Since 2010 there has been considerable progress towards an agreement to hold a referendum that would recognise Indigenous people in the constitution. The expert panel for constitutional change released their initial report in January 2012 with recommendations for specific constitutional amendments. The movement for constitutional change had a relatively low profile at the time of the 2012 Barometer but has steadily gained attention during 2013 and 2014.

The Federal Election 2013

The election saw a change of Commonwealth Government and the ushering in of a national focus on austerity and a more conservative agenda, particularly towards immigration and welfare. However, conversely, the Abbott Government has also been more visible in its support for constitutional recognition for Indigenous Australians. These 'mixed messages' are arguably both helping and hindering the reconciliation cause.

We continue to view the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians as important

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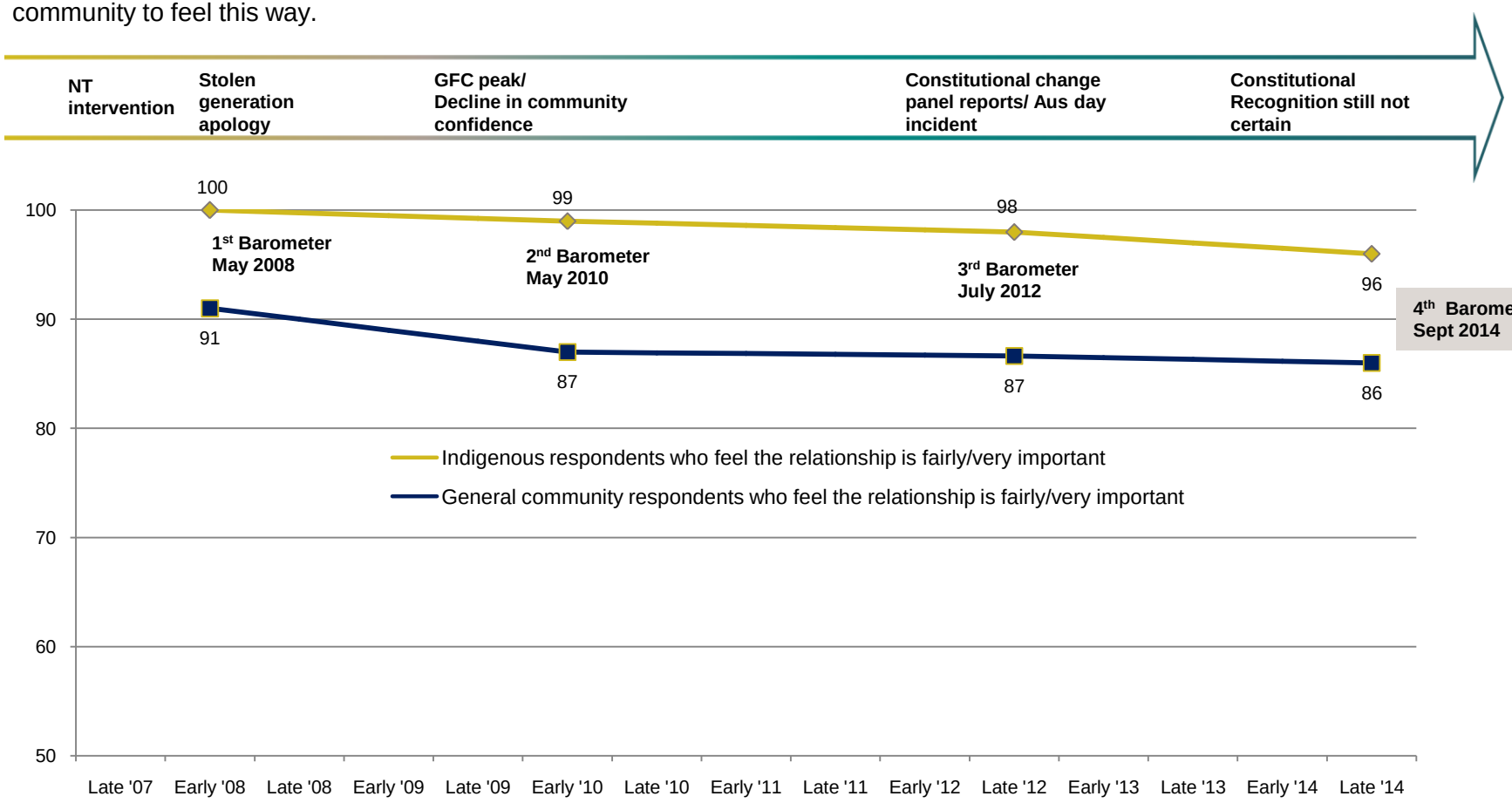
The vast majority of both the general community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities continue to feel that the relationship between them is an important one. However, Indigenous people remain more likely than the general community to feel this way.



General community trust towards Indigenous Australians has increased

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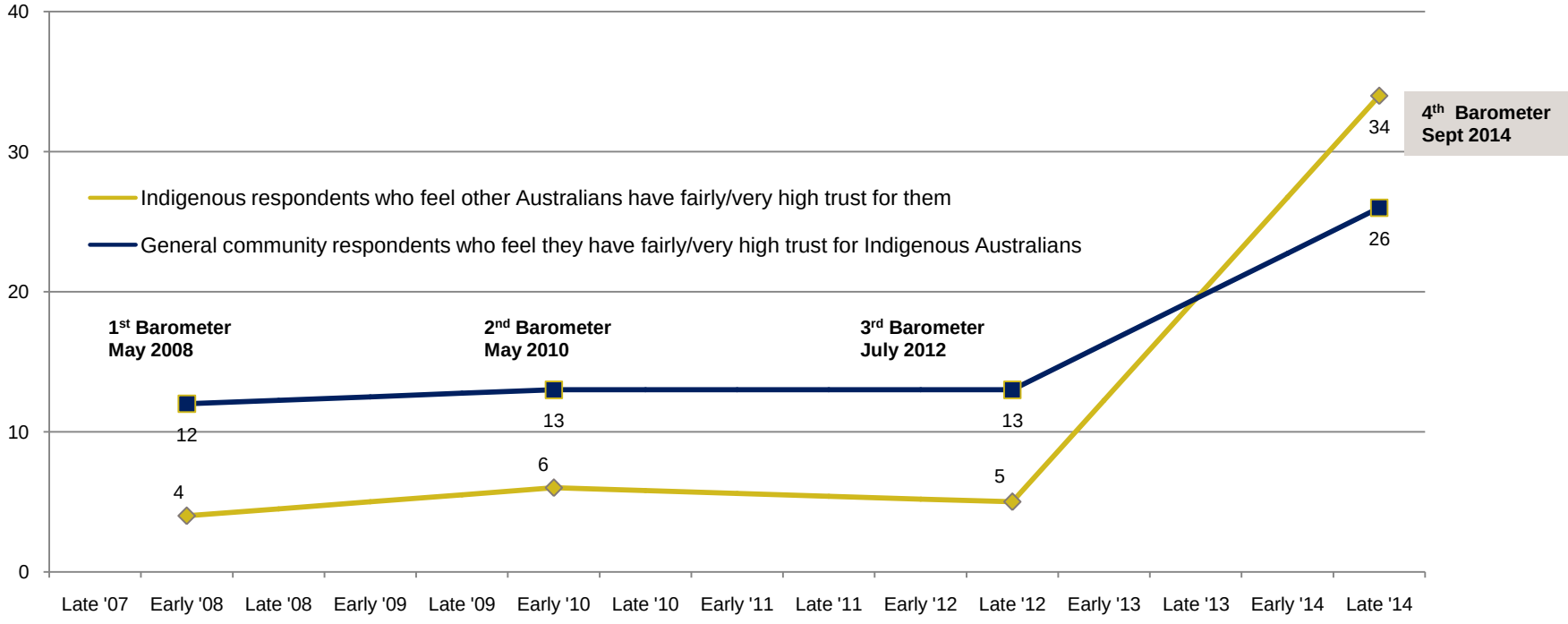
There has been a considerable increase in the level of trust perceived to be held by other Australians for Indigenous Australians. This shift is evident in both communities, though it is particularly dramatic among Indigenous respondents. This may reflect the positive environment being created by the campaign for constitutional recognition over the past 2 years.

NT intervention → **Stolen generation apology** → **GFC peak/ Decline in community confidence** → **Constitutional change panel reports/ Aus day incident** → **Constitutional Recognition gathers pace but still not certain**



Indigenous trust towards other Australians has increased

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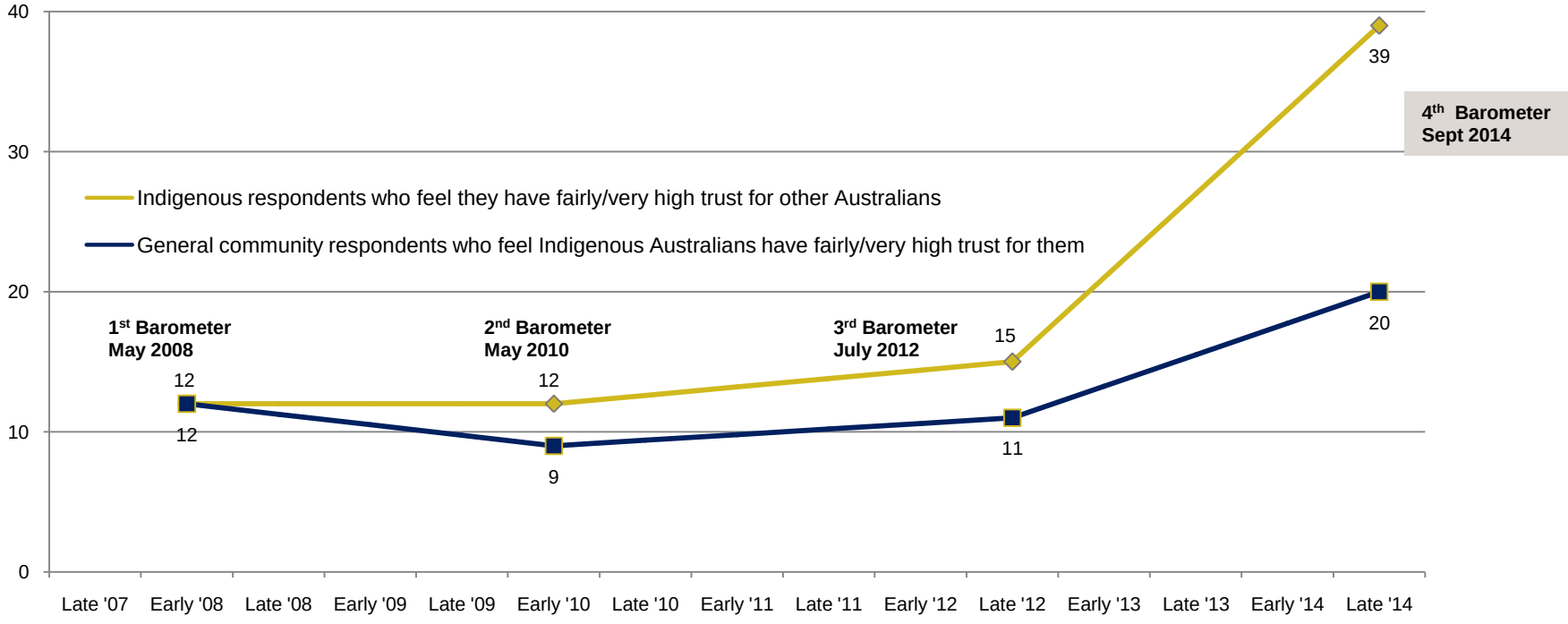
There has been a considerable increase in the level of trust perceived to be held by other Indigenous Australians for other Australians. This shift is evident in both communities, though it is particularly dramatic among Indigenous respondents. Again, this may reflect the positive environment being created by the campaign for constitutional recognition.

NT intervention → **Stolen generation apology** → **GFC peak/ Decline in community confidence** → **Constitutional change panel reports/ Aus day incident** → **Constitutional Recognition gathers pace but still not certain**



Both groups believe they trust more than the other group

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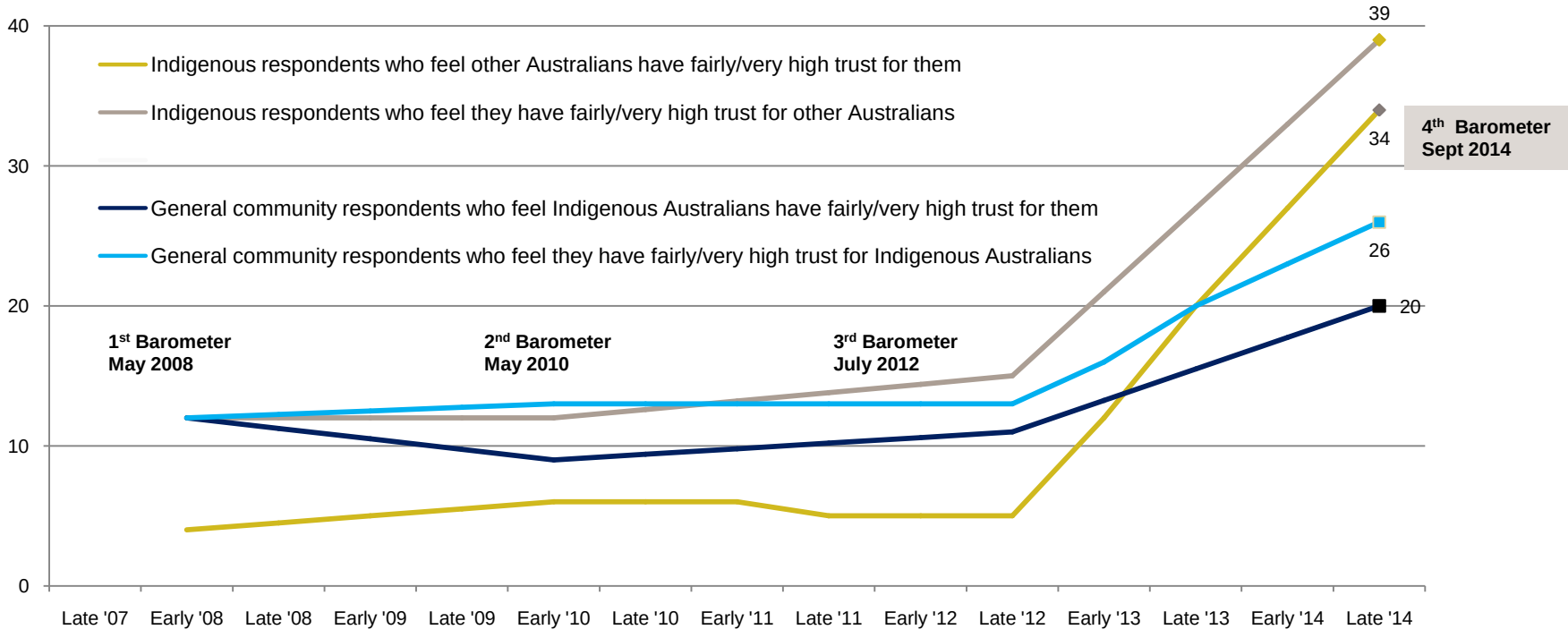
Throughout the 6 years since the first Barometer, both non-Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Australians have more widely felt that they trust the other group, than the other group trusts them. These 'gaps' in the perceptions of trust may highlight a key ongoing misunderstanding between the communities.

NT intervention | **Stolen generation apology** | **GFC peak/ Decline in community confidence** | **Constitutional change panel reports/ Aus day incident** | **Constitutional Recognition gathers pace but still not certain**



Education and personal experience help drive views that the relationship is very important

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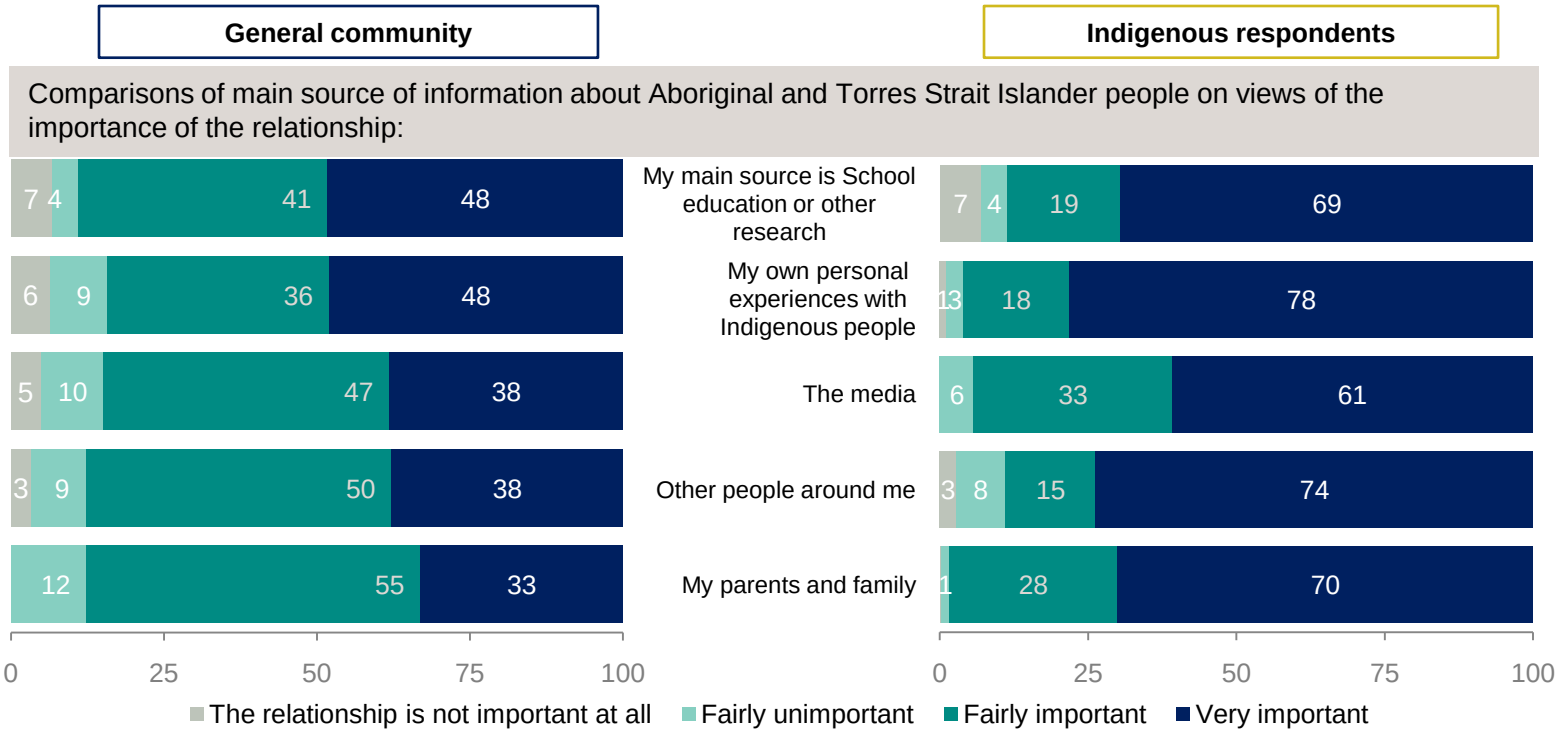

People among the general community who cite personal experience or education sources (such as school or other research) as their main source of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are most likely to view the relationship as very important.

By contrast, people in the general community who mostly 'know' Indigenous people and cultures through the filtered lenses of the media or other people around them are more likely to view the relationship as fairly important.

Most Australians hardly ever socialise with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australians

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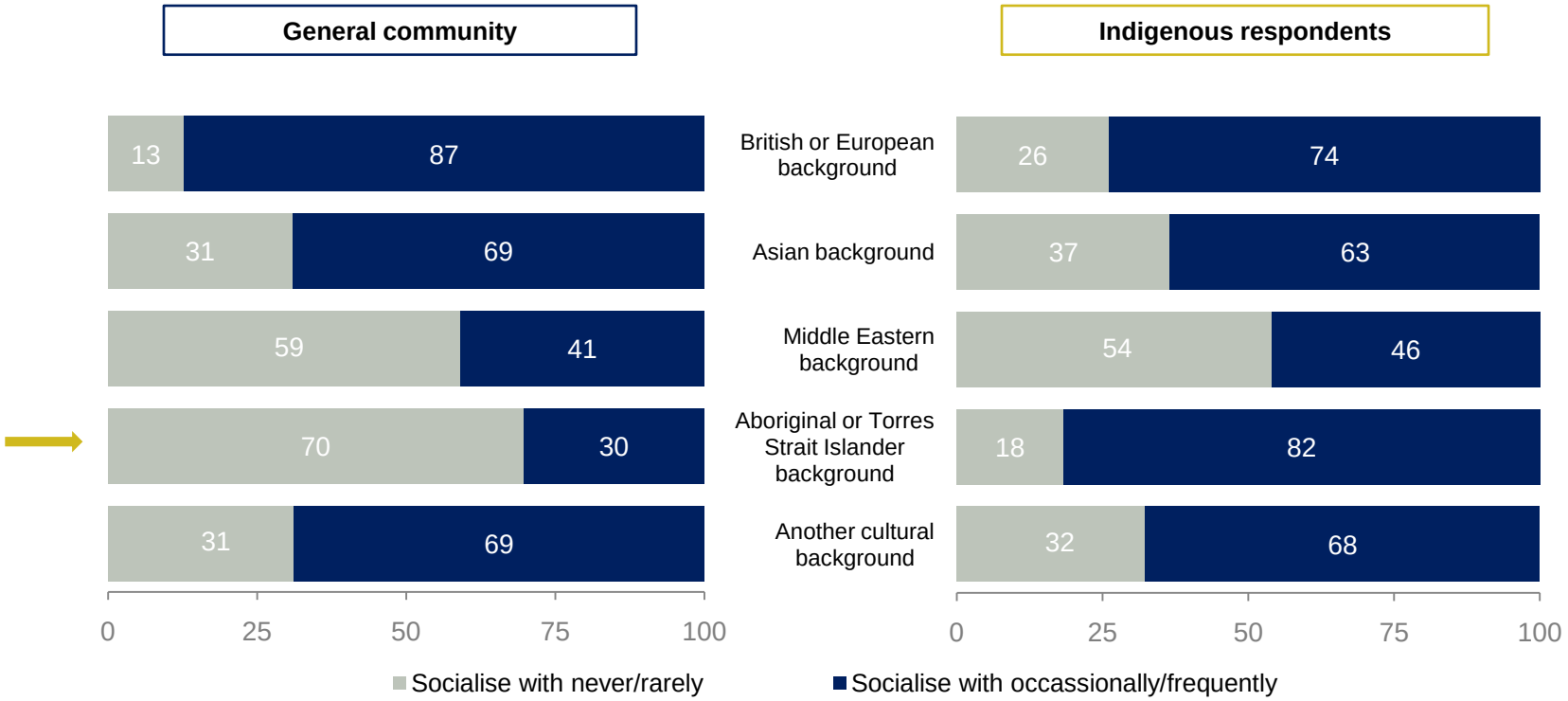

Misunderstandings of trust levels and reliance on the media or other people to know about Indigenous people are unsurprising given the general community typically has little 'socialising' contact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. While undoubtedly the relatively small Indigenous population in Australia doesn't make regular contact easy, this again highlights a key 'gap' in the reconciliation story.

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australians are more likely to experience racial prejudice

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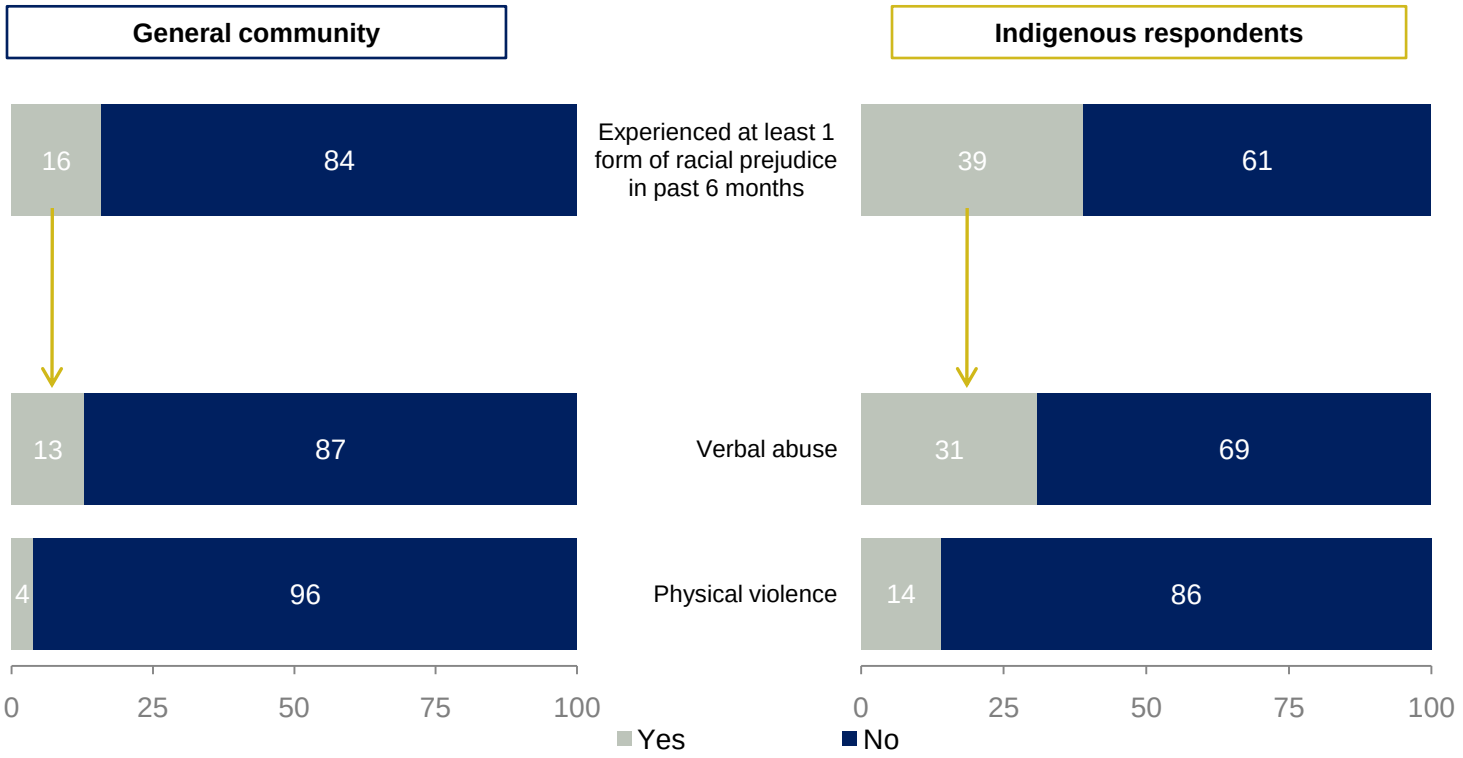
More Indigenous people have experienced racial prejudice in the last 6 months, than the general community, with 4 out of 10 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents having suffered at least one form of such prejudice. The most common forms of this have been verbal abuse or physical violence. This significant 'gap' in daily realities underlines a key stumbling block in the relationship and impediment to reconciliation.



The attitude among younger non-Indigenous Australians bodes well for the future

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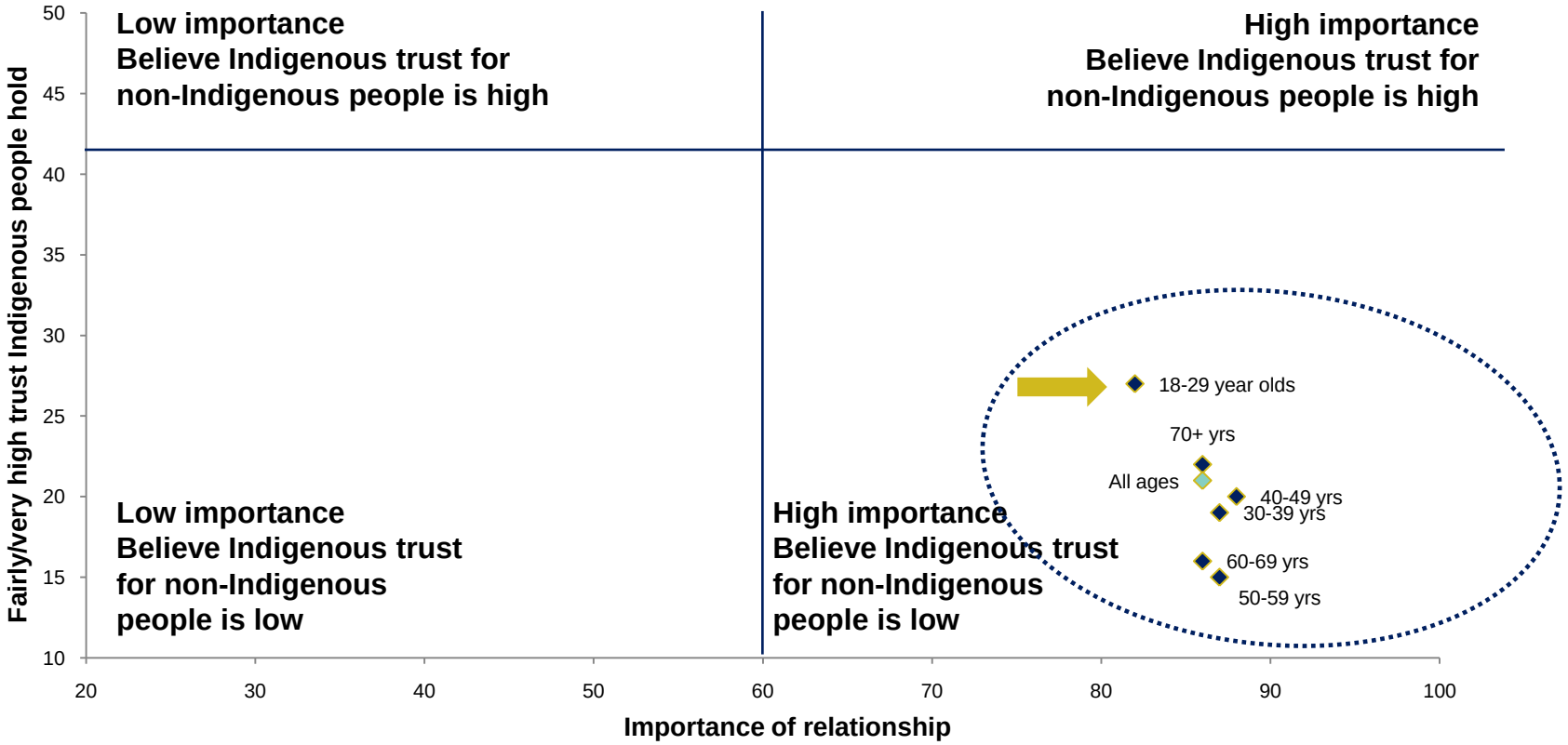
While the majority of Australians view the relationship as important, 18-29 year olds in the general community are most likely also to believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians trust non-Indigenous Australians.



The attitude among younger Indigenous Australians bodes well for the future

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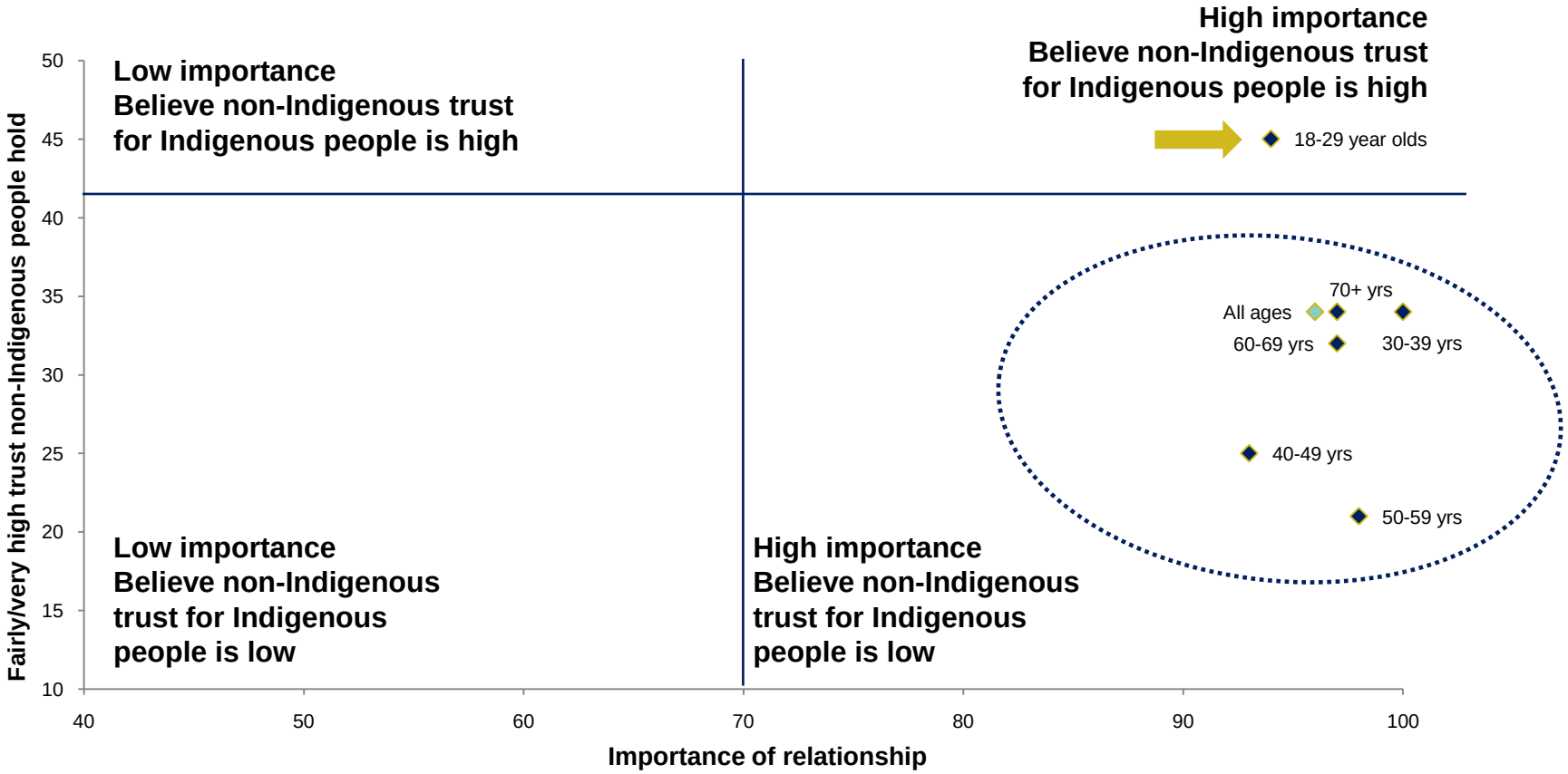
While the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians view the relationship as important, 18-29 year olds in the Indigenous community are most likely also to believe that other Australians trust non-Indigenous Australians.



Australian Reconciliation Barometer 2014

Full results comparing Indigenous-only perspectives with the general public

Race Relations

How do we see cultural diversity and how well do we treat each other?

Most Australians socialise with Indigenous people less than with any other major cultural group

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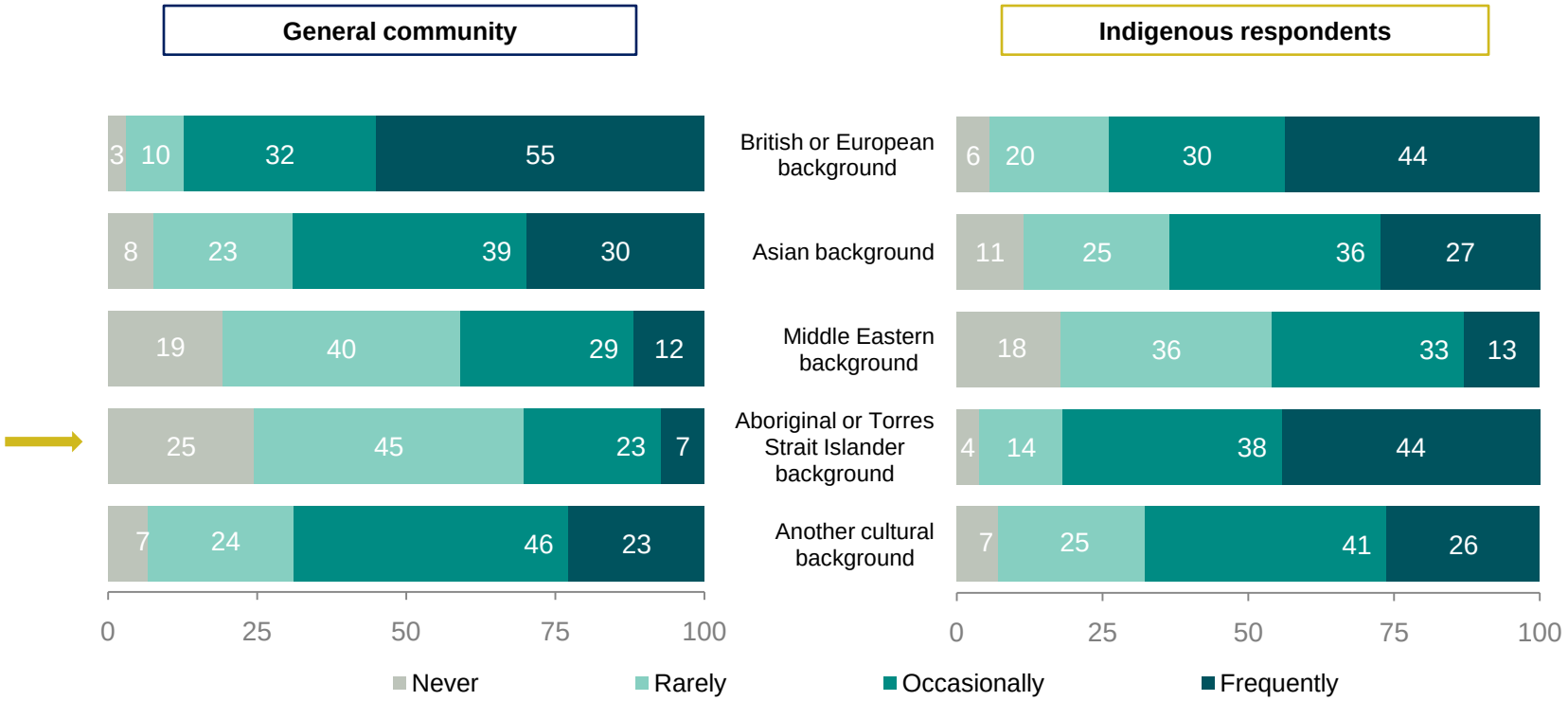

Australians are most likely to socialise with people of British or European cultural backgrounds on a frequent basis. When it comes to socialising with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the general public are least likely to do so frequently (7%) than with any other major cultural group. Conversely, Indigenous people are just as likely to socialise frequently with people of British/European backgrounds as with their own people (44%).

Q. In a typical week, at work or otherwise, how often do you socialise with people from the following different cultural groups (including your own)?

We mostly have a good relationship with medical staff, employers and school staff

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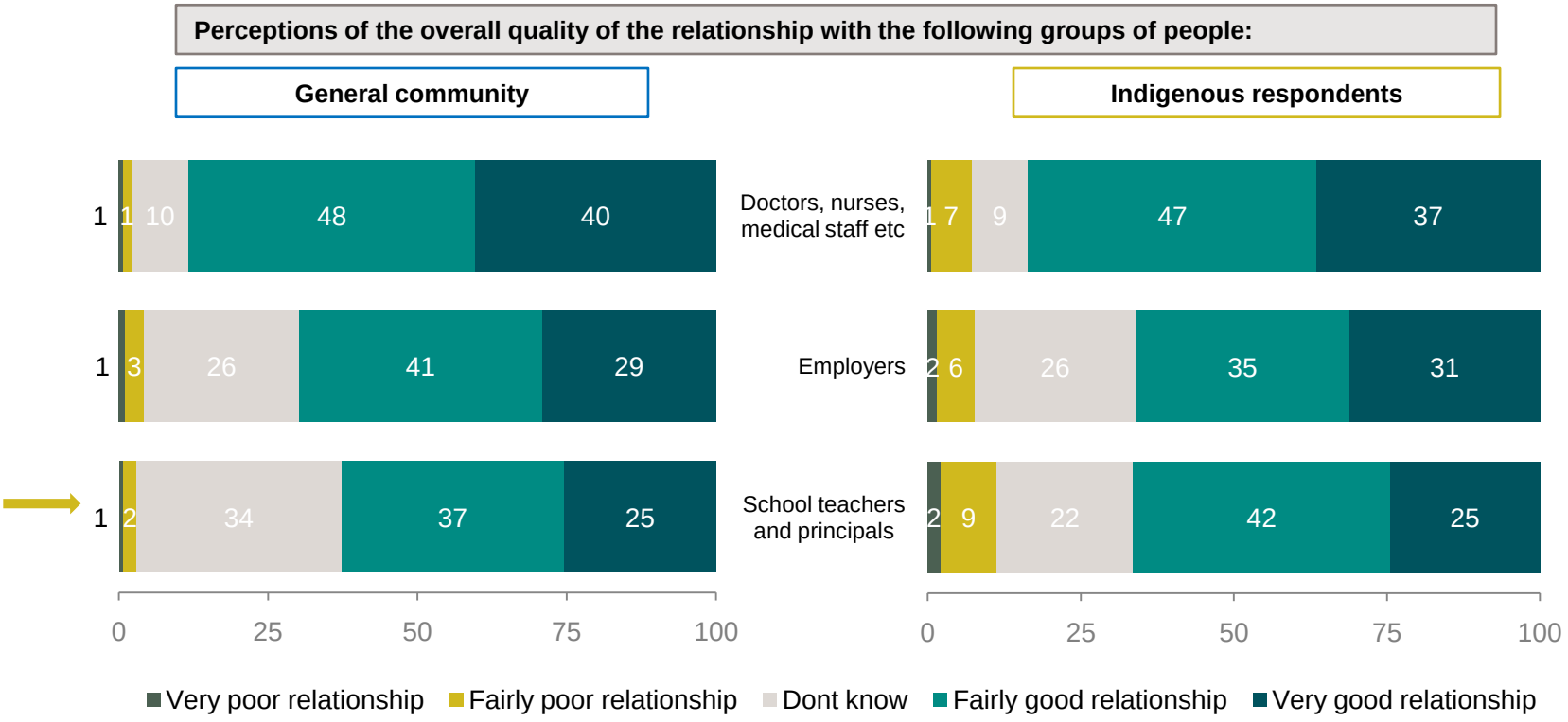

The general community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people largely feel they have good relationships with medical staff, employers, teachers and principals.

However, Indigenous respondents are much more likely to have a poor relationship with education staff (11%) than the general community (3%).

Q. Overall, do you find you have a good relationship or a poor relationship with the following groups?

Indigenous Australians are more likely to have poor relationships with local shops and police

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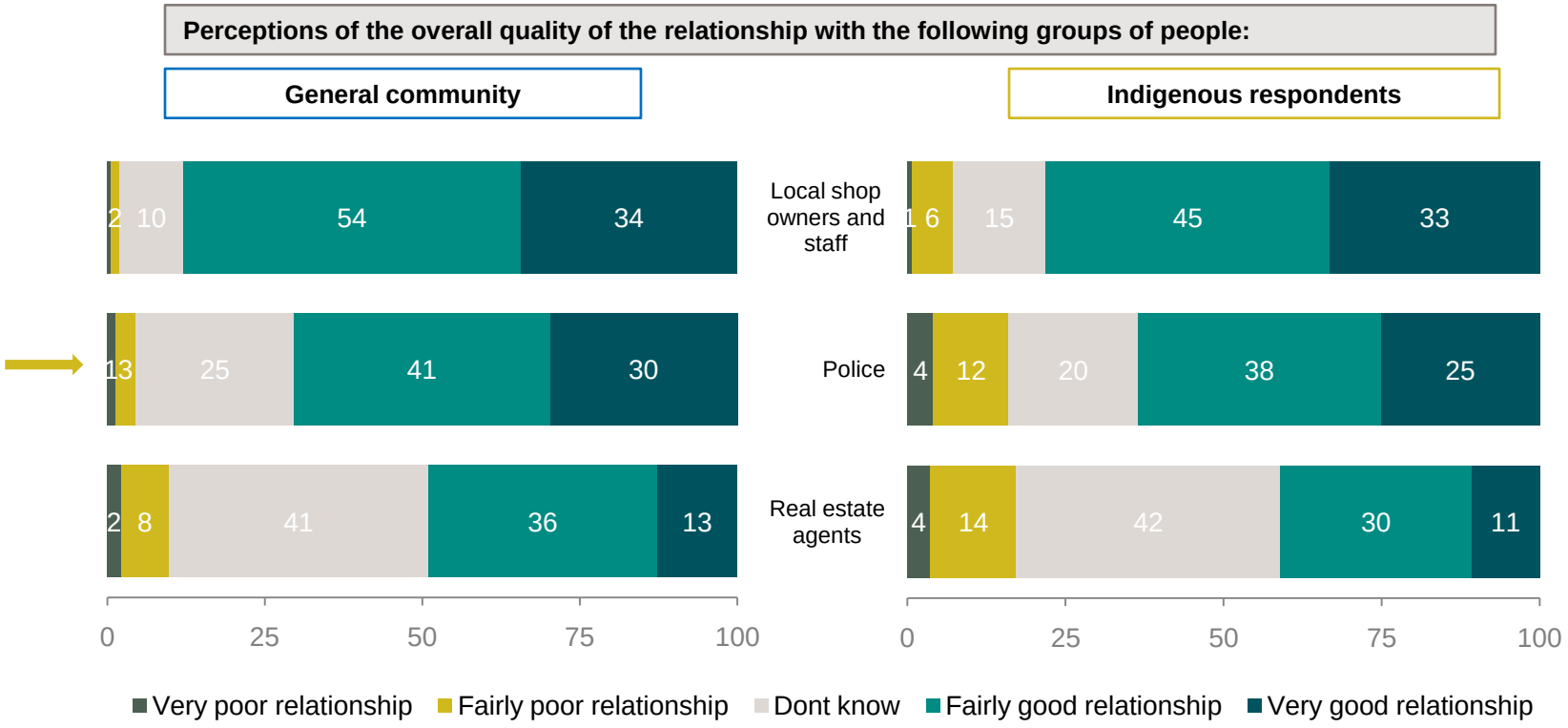
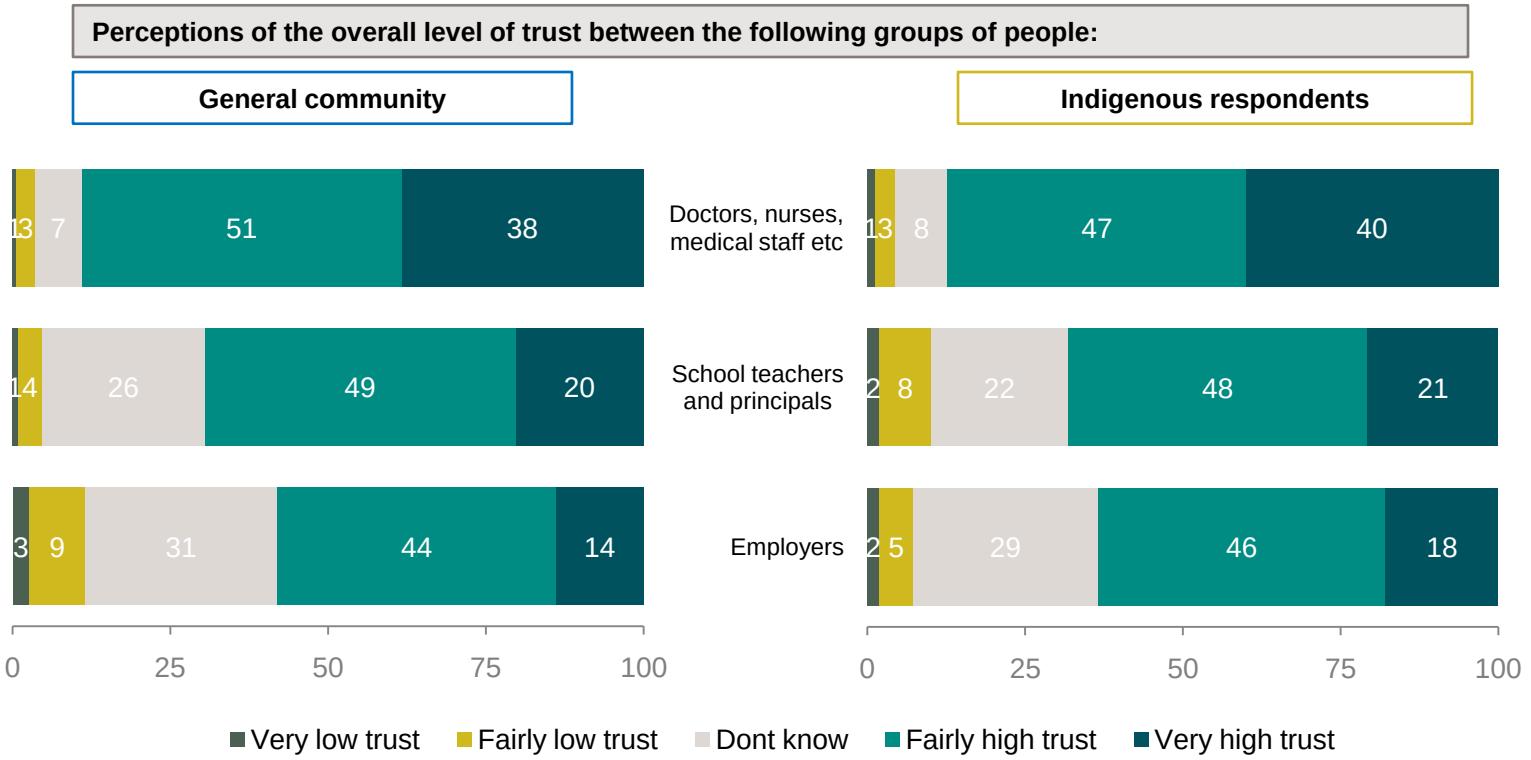


The general community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people largely feel they have good relationships with shop owners and staff and police. However, both groups are less certain about their overall relationship with real estate agents.

Indigenous respondents are more likely to have a poor relationship with staff at their local shops (7%) and police (16%) than the general community (2% and 4% respectively).

Q. Overall, do you find you have a good relationship or a poor relationship with the following groups?

We mostly feel there is mutual trust with medical staff, employers and school staff



The general community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people largely feel there is a shared trust with medical staff, employers, teachers and principals.

However, 10% of Indigenous respondents feel there is low trust with education staff, compared with 5% of the general community.

Q. Overall, how much trust do you feel there is between you and the following groups?

Indigenous Australians are more likely to feel there is a low level of trust with police

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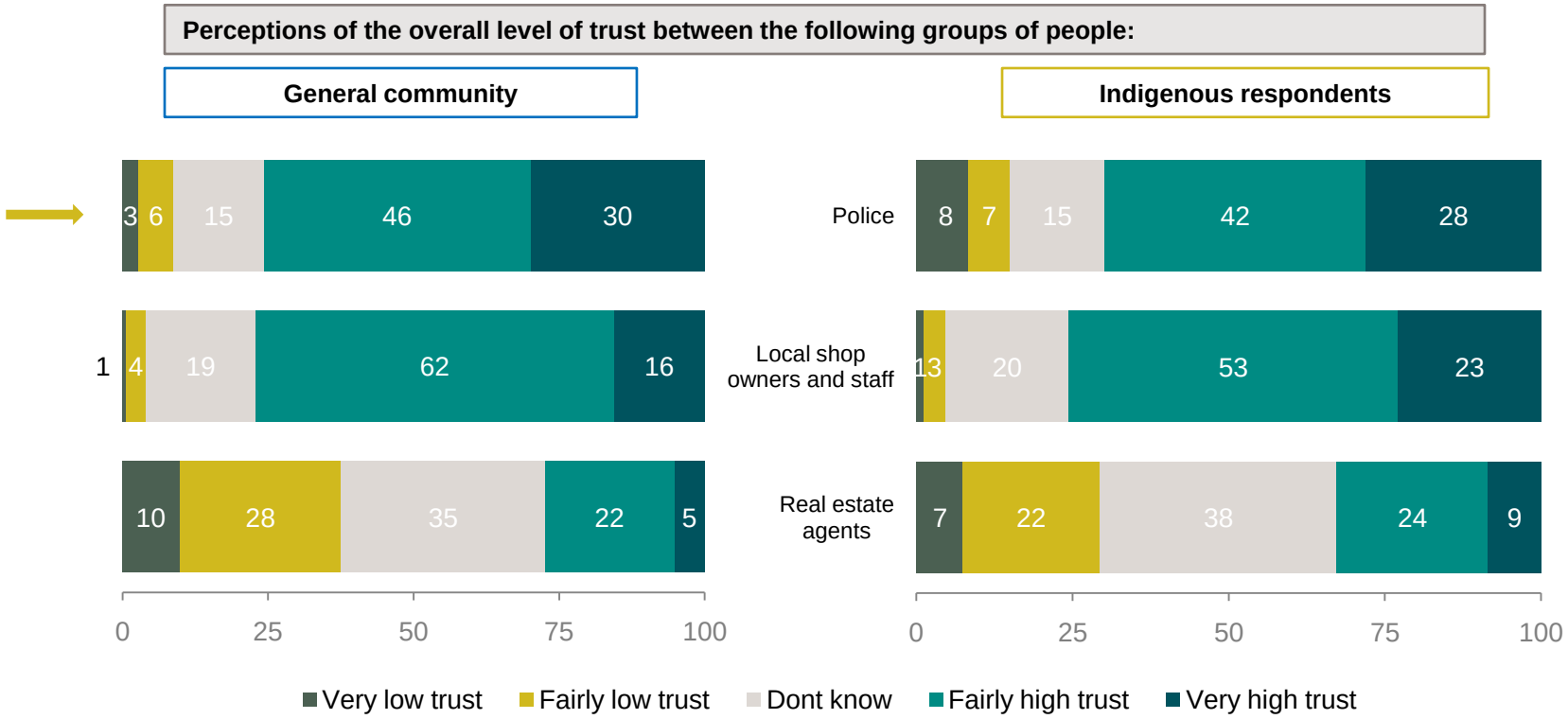

The general community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people largely feel there is a shared trust with shop owners and staff and police. However, both groups are divided about the overall level of trust shared with real estate agents.

Indigenous respondents are more likely to feel there is a low level of trust with police (15%) than the general public (9%).

Q. Overall, how much trust do you feel there is between you and the following groups?

Indigenous Australians remain more likely to view the relationship as very important

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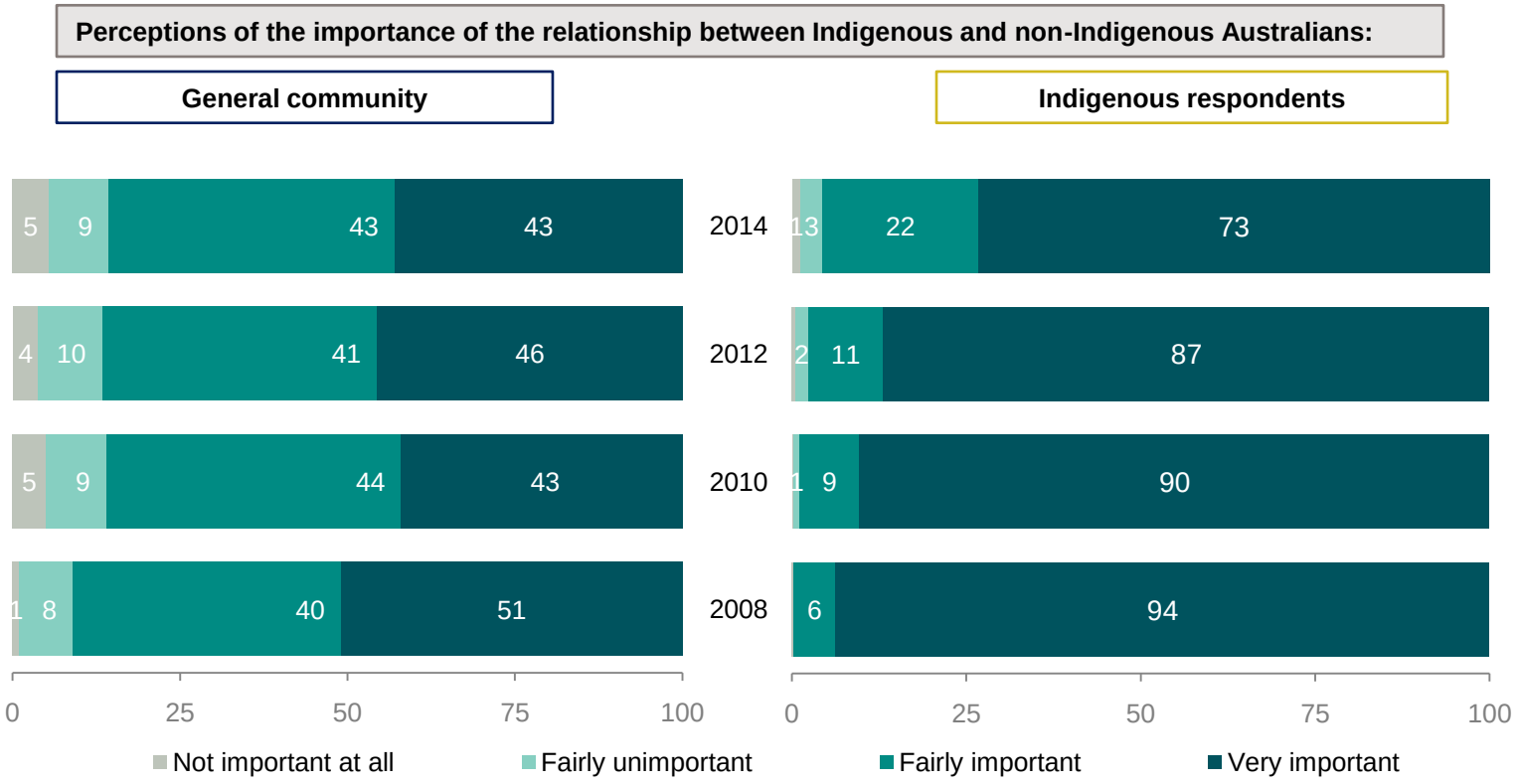

Most people among the general community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community continue to feel the relationship is important to Australia as a nation. However, Indigenous respondents (73%) remain much more likely than the general community (43%) to view the relationship as very important.

While the general community sentiment has remained fairly constant since 2008, the percentage of Indigenous people who consider the relationship “very important” has steadily declined since 2008.

Q. How important is the relationship between Indigenous people and other Australians for Australia as a nation?

Trust among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians has increased since 2012

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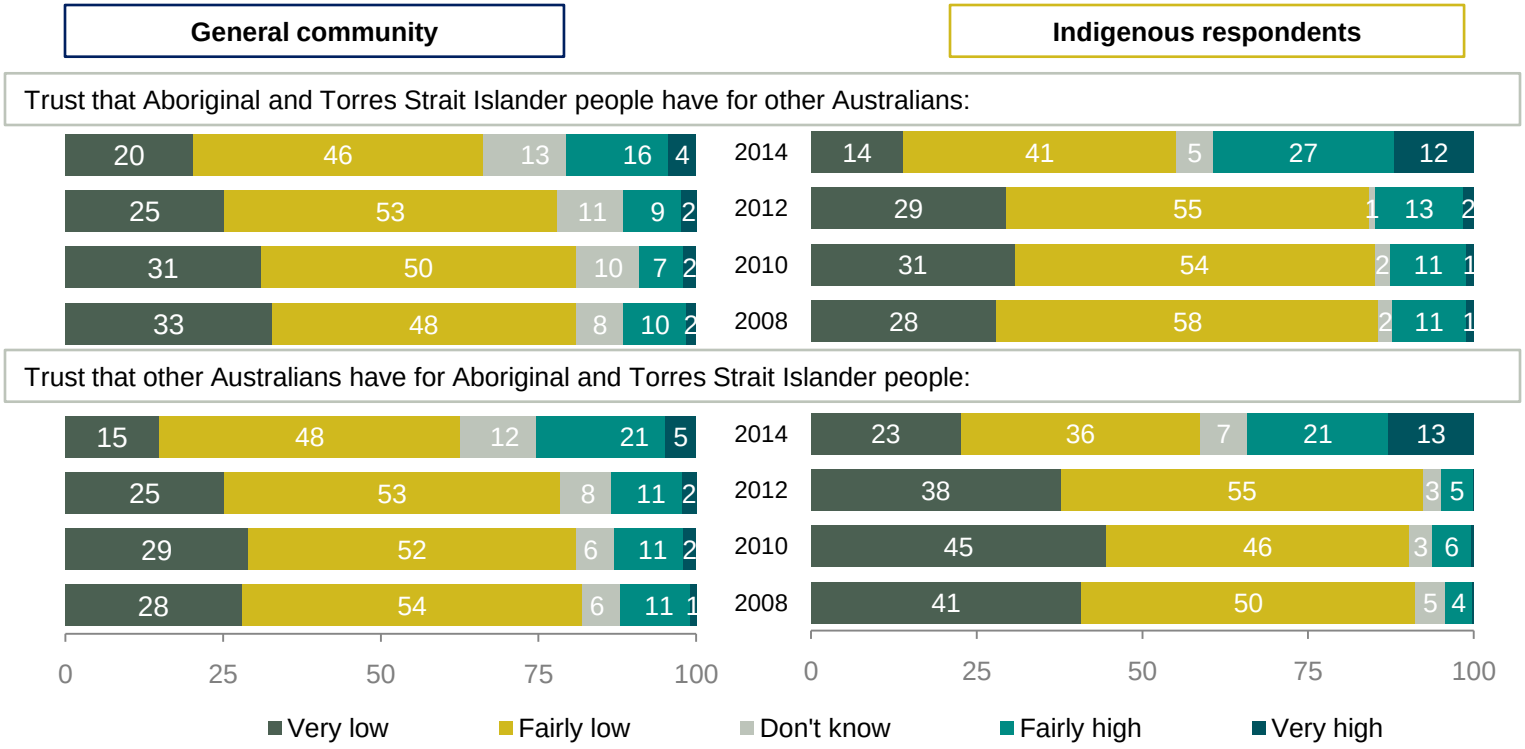

The general community are more likely to think that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have very low trust for them (20%), while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to feel other Australians have very low trust for them (23%).

However, there has been a marked rise in both groups in the last 2 years, in terms of higher levels of trust. This is particularly notable among Indigenous respondents, with 39% feeling they have trust for other Australians (up from 15% in 2012), and 34% feeling other Australians have trust in them (up from 5% in 2012).

Q. How would you describe the level of trust between the following groups of people?

Perceptions of prejudice 2008-12

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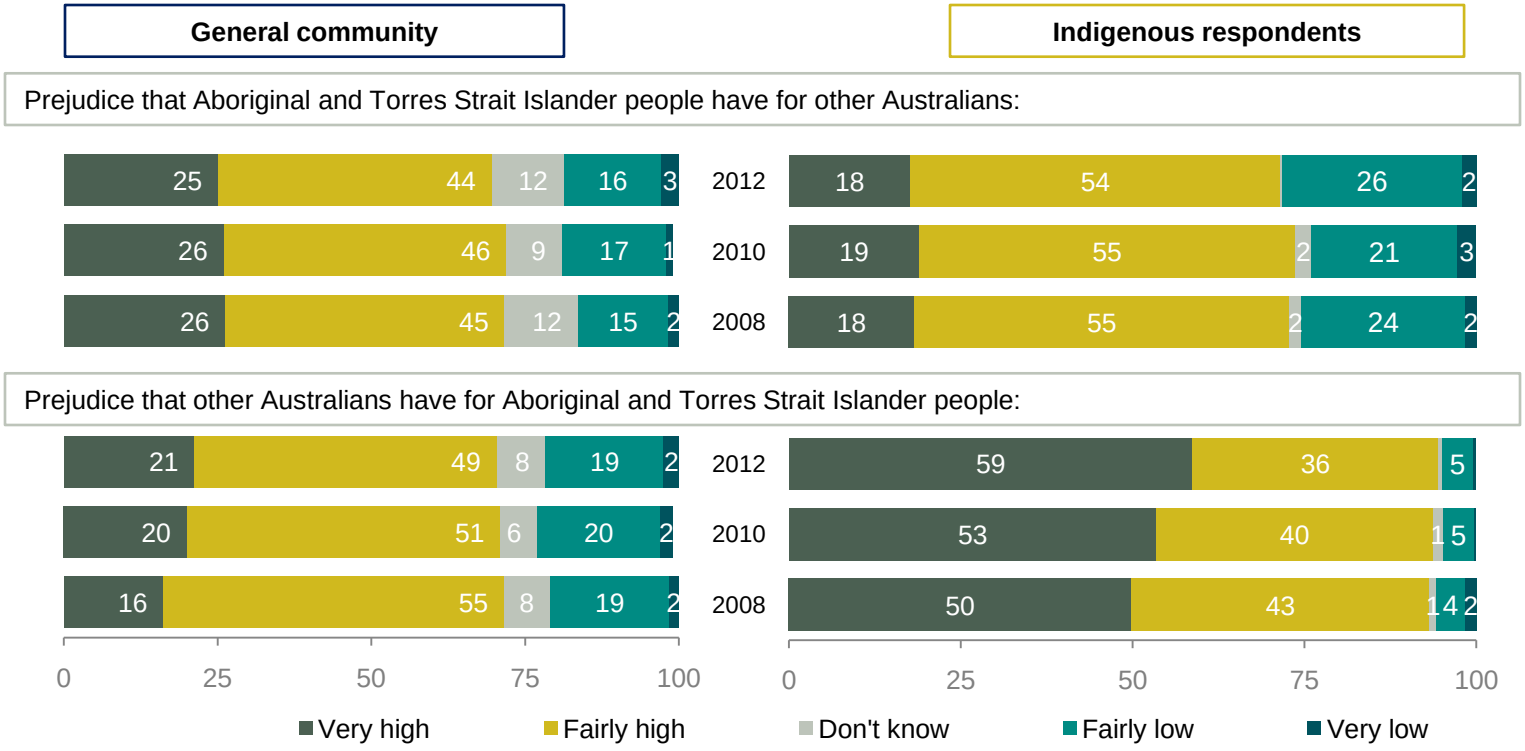

Between 2008-2012, both groups felt there were relatively high levels of prejudice between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

While the general community saw roughly equal levels of prejudice between the two groups, Indigenous respondents believed that prejudice towards Indigenous people from other Australians was more widespread than the prejudice they held for other Australians.

Q. How would you describe the level of prejudice between the following groups of people?

We continue to be more likely to see low trust and high prejudice between ourselves

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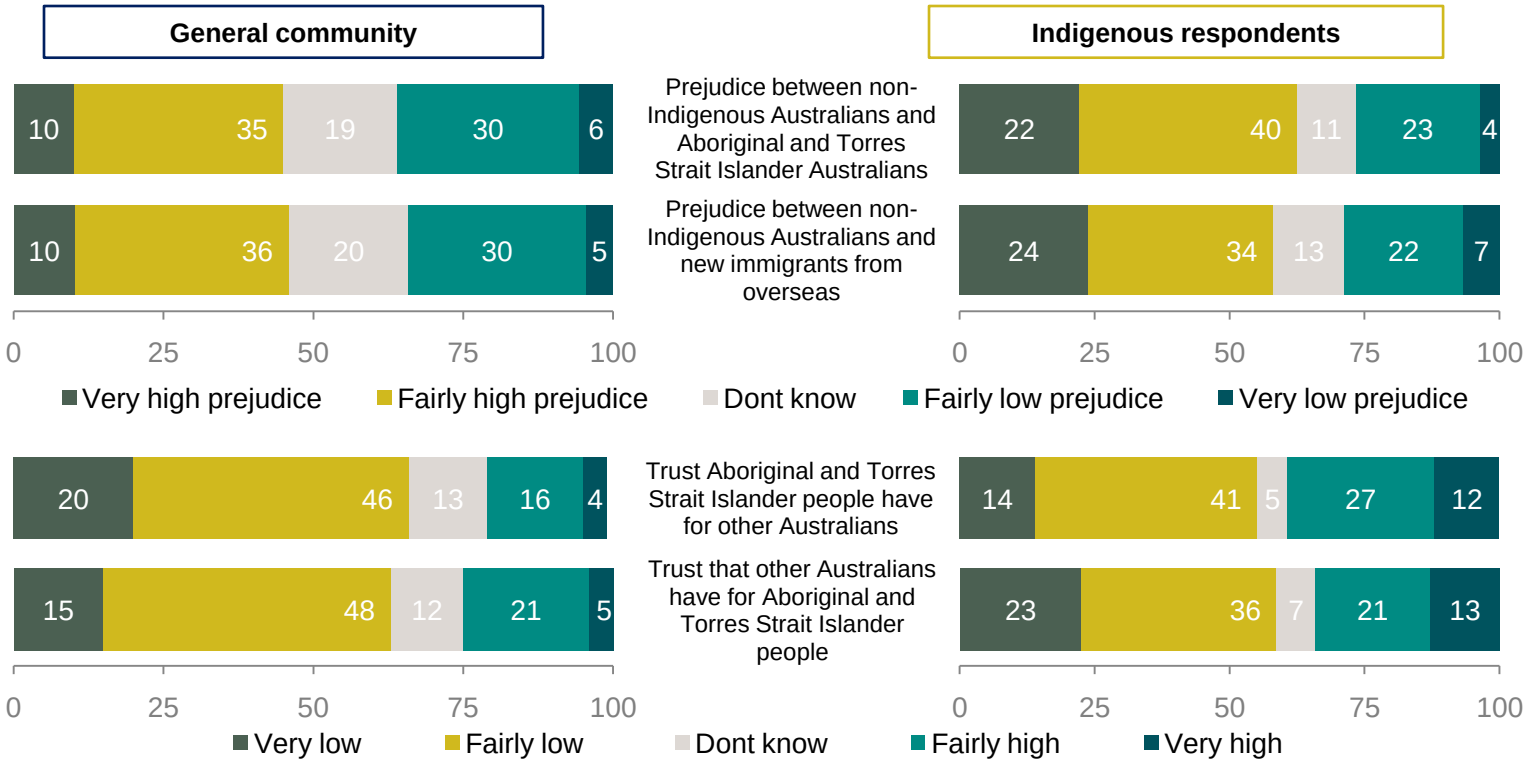

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be more likely to feel there is high prejudice between themselves and non-Indigenous Australians (62%), than the general community (45%). Both groups see similar levels of prejudice between non-Indigenous Australians and new immigrants, as they do between themselves.

Conversely, the general community is more likely to see low levels of trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, than Indigenous respondents. However, both groups perceive their own trust more highly than the other group's.

Q. How would you describe the level of prejudice between the following groups of people in Australia?

Few people believe non-Indigenous Australians are superior

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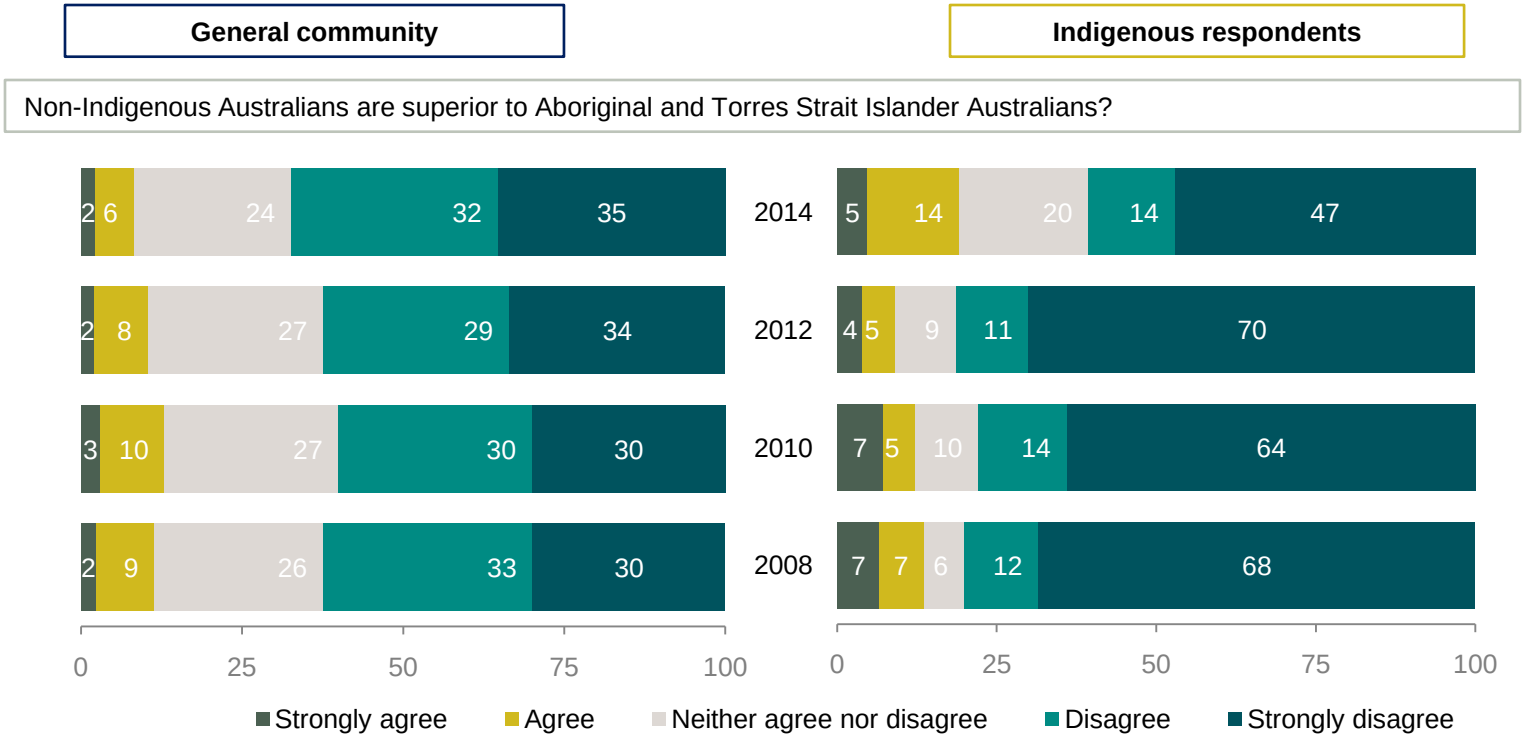

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be more likely to disagree strongly (50%) that non-Indigenous Australians are superior, than the general community (35%). However, while the general community sentiment has remained fairly constant since 2008, there has been a notable increase in the number of Indigenous respondents who agree with this sentiment (19%), up from 9% in 2012.

It is notable that 19% of Indigenous respondents agree with this sentiment. This may reflect issues of low self esteem among Indigenous people.

Q. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement

Indigenous Australians are more likely to worry about other cultures

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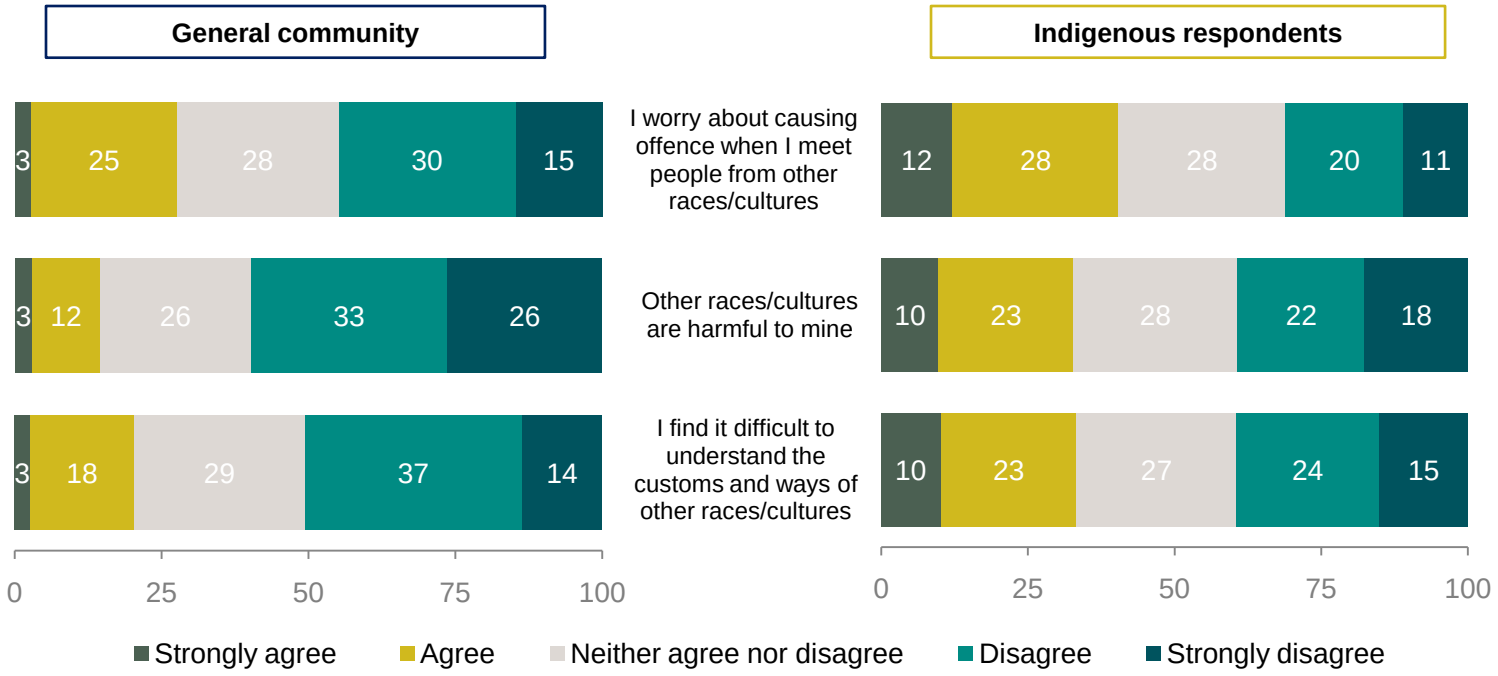

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to worry about causing offence to people from another culture (40%), or to worry that other cultures are harmful to their own (33%), or find other cultures difficult to understand (33%), than the general community.

Q. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

The media continues to be a key source of information about Indigenous people for most Australians

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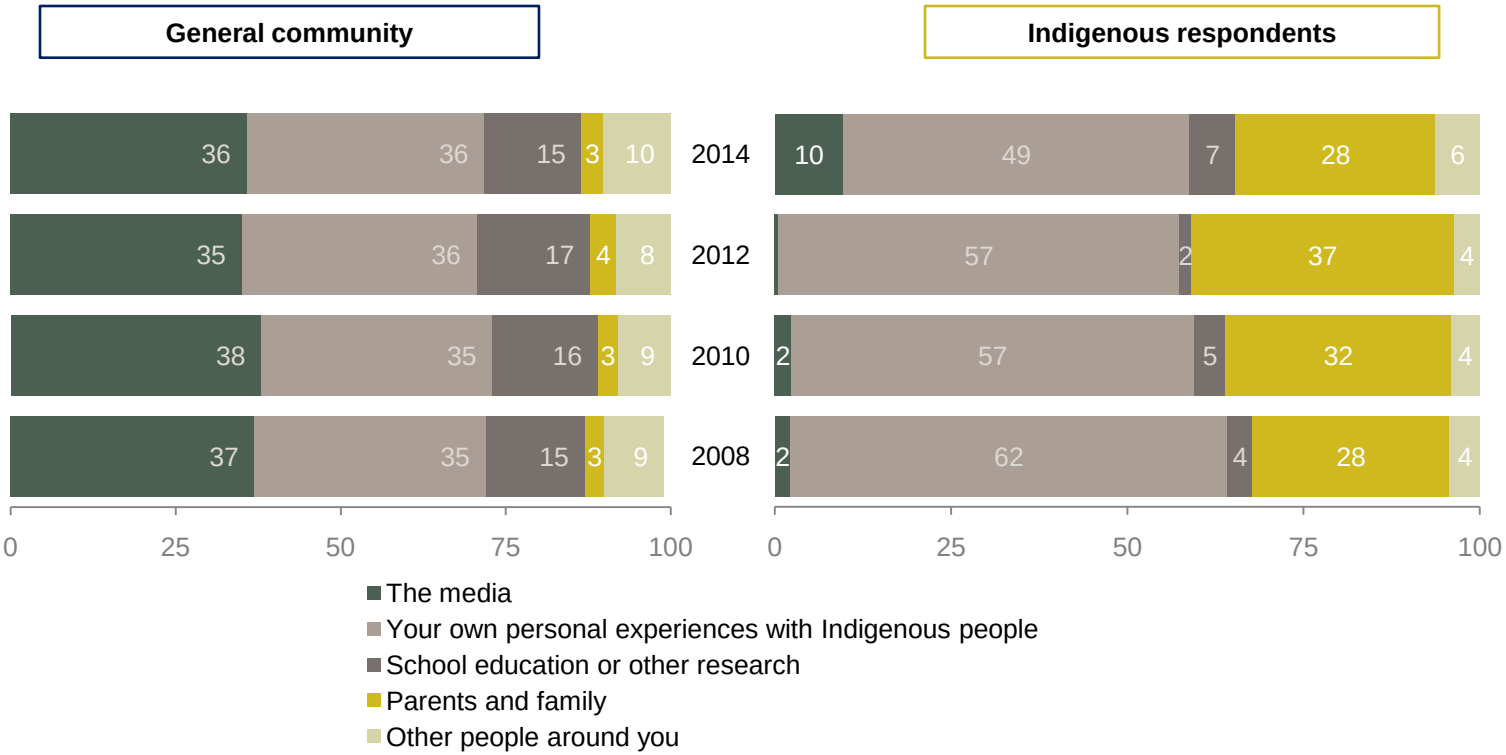

The general community remain more likely to cite the media (36%) or other secondary sources (such as school or other research, 15%) as their main source of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Unsurprisingly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to learn about their people mostly from their own interactions with their families and communities. However, there has been a notable increase in the number of Indigenous people citing the media (10%) as their main source, up from 2% or less between 2008-12.

Q. Which of the following is your main source of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

We are divided over how the media usually portrays Indigenous people

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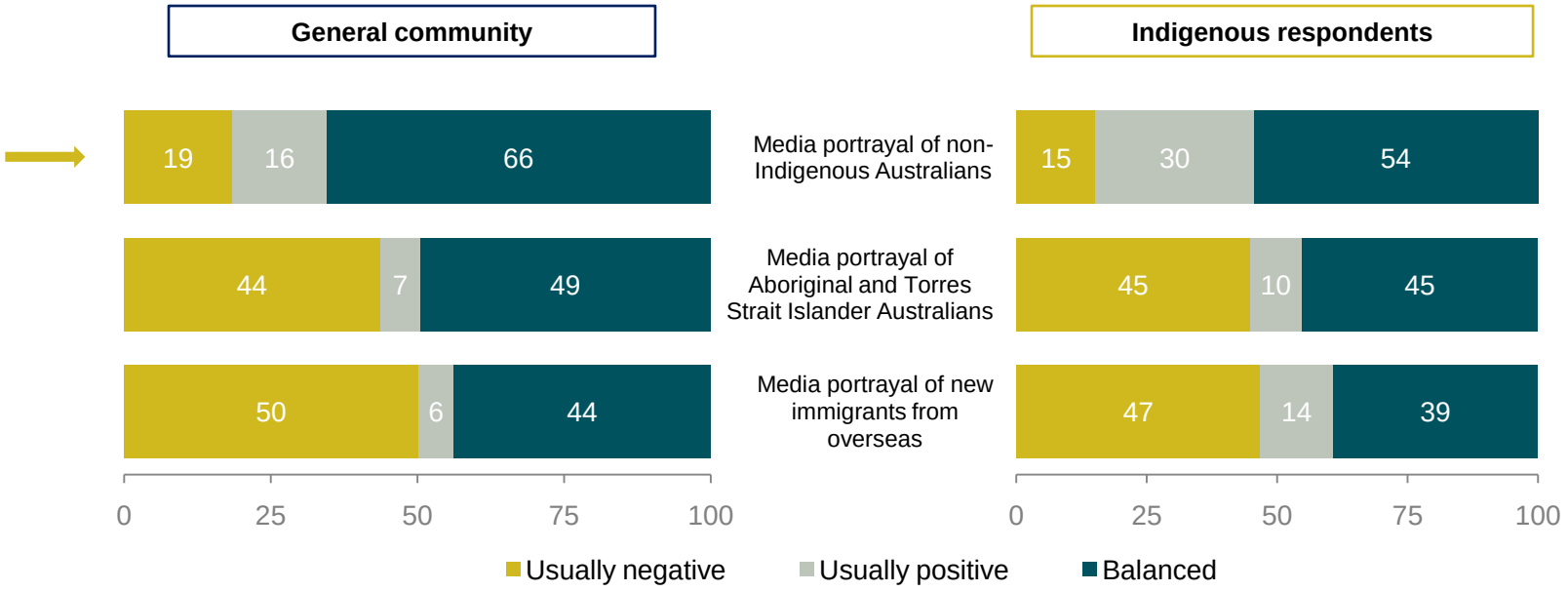
RESEARCH & CONSULTING

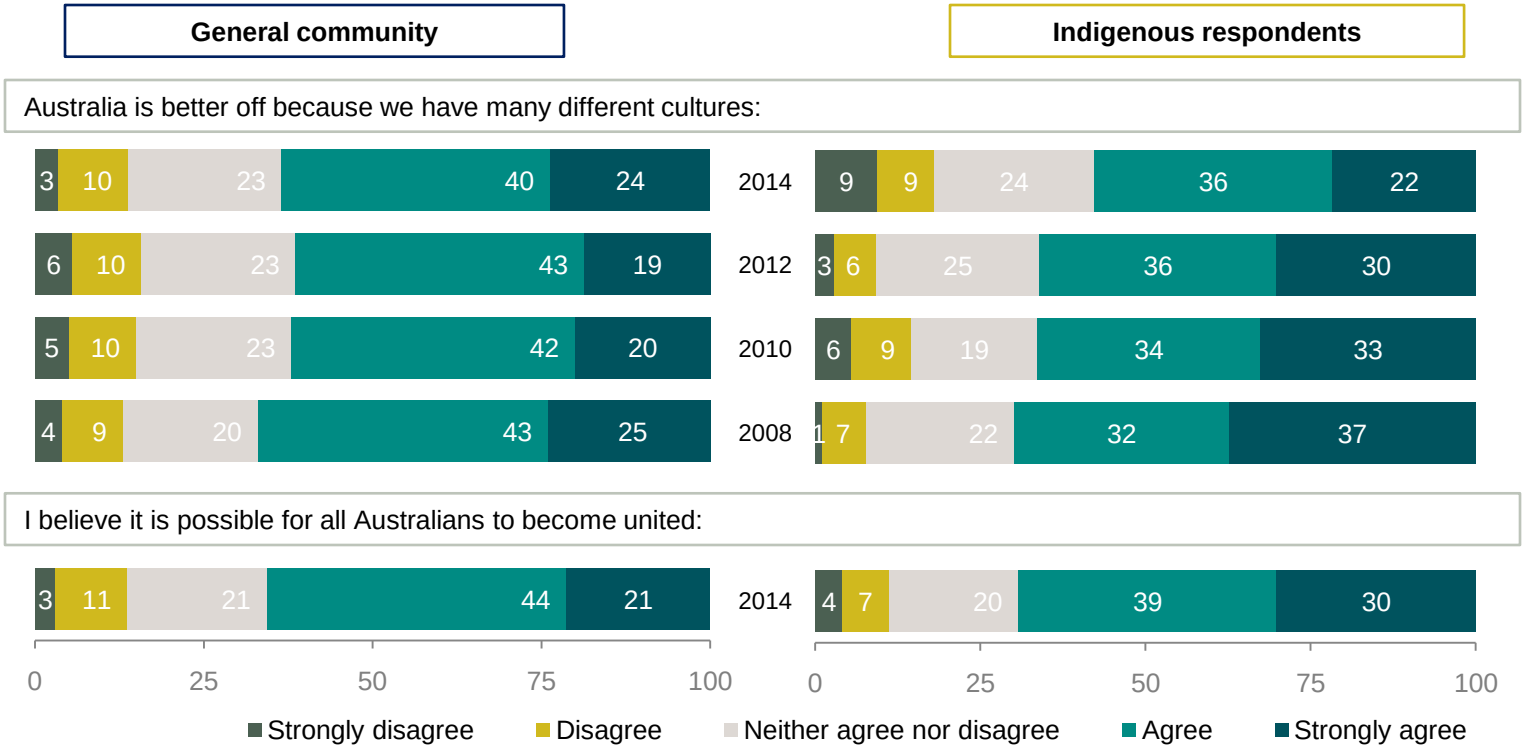


Both the general community and Indigenous people are divided over whether the media usually portrays Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a negative or balanced way.

However, Indigenous people are more likely to believe the media usually portrays non-Indigenous Australians positively (30%), than the general community (16%).

Q. Do you believe the media presents mostly a positive, negative or balanced portrayal of the following groups of people in Australia?

Most Australians still agree we are better off with many cultural groups



The general community continues to mostly agree that Australia is better off for having many cultural groups (64%), as do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (58%). However, while the general community sentiment has remained constant since 2012, there has been a slight increase in the number of Indigenous respondents who disagree (18%), up from 9%.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are slightly more likely to strongly agree (30%) that all Australians could become united, than the general community (21%).

Q. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

More Indigenous Australians believe Australia is a racist country

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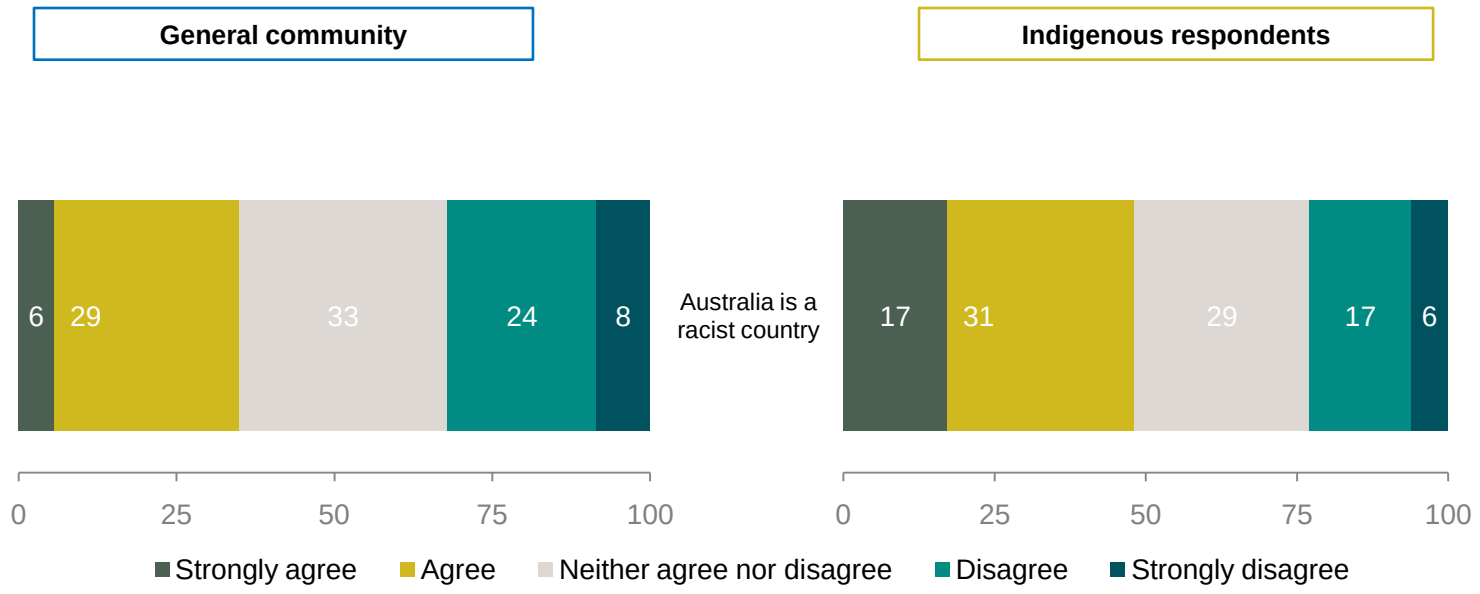

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to agree Australia is a racist country (48%), than the general community (35%), and are much more likely to strongly agree (17%, compared to 6%).

Q. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement

Indigenous Australians are more likely to have experienced racial prejudice in the past 6 months

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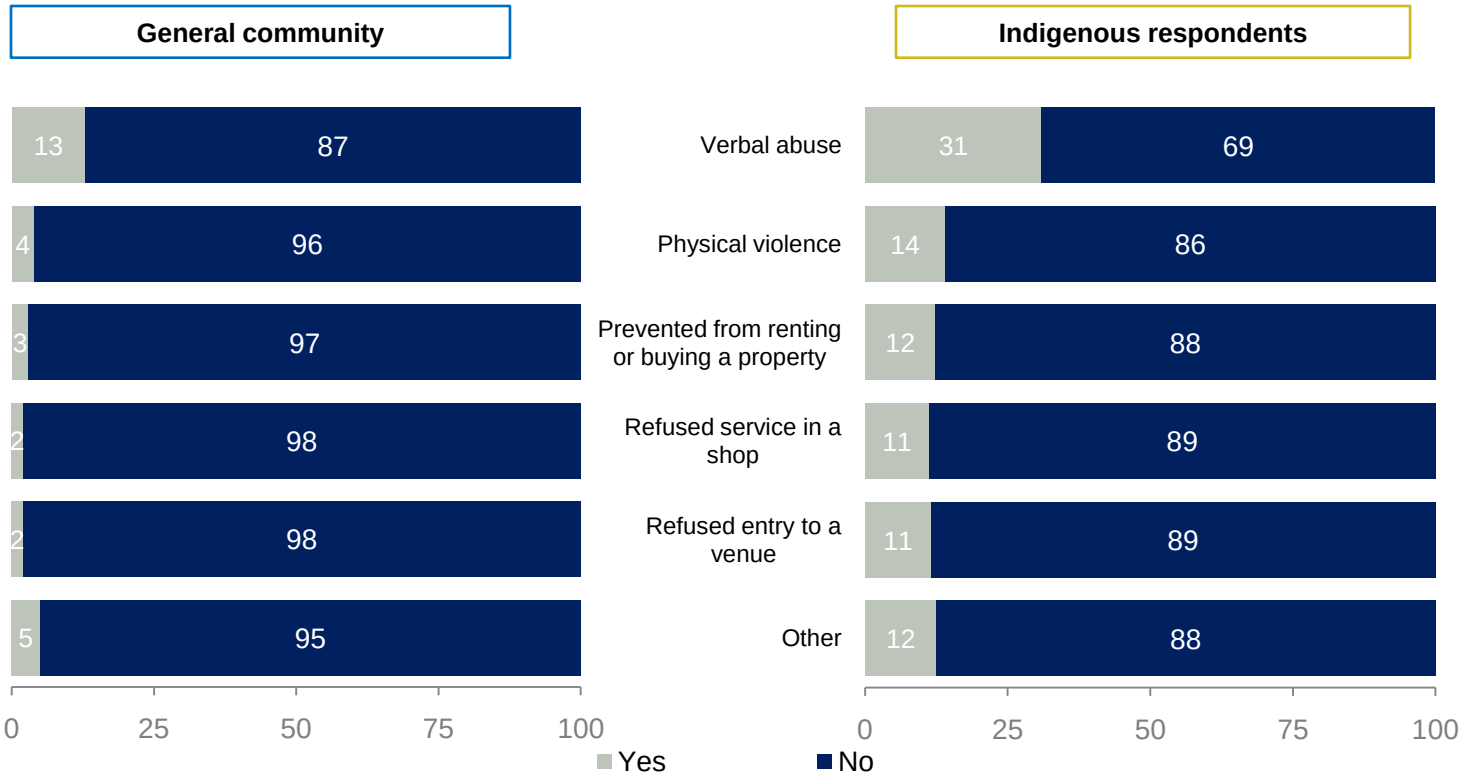
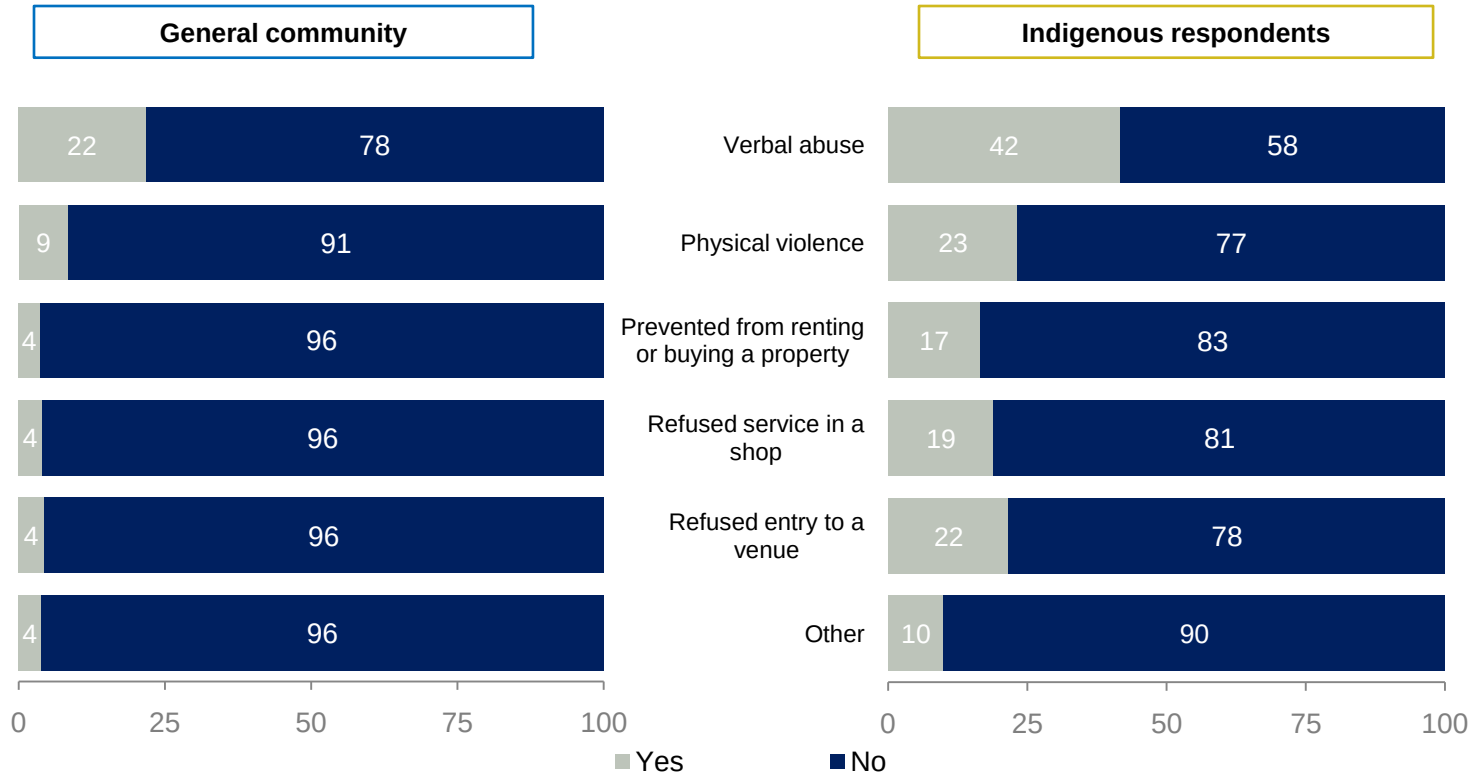


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 3 times more likely to have experienced verbal abuse in the past 6 months (31%), than the general community (13%), and are also more likely to have experienced at least one form of prejudice, on the basis of their race.

Q. In the past 6 months, have you personally experienced any of the following forms of prejudice, on the basis of your race?

Indigenous Australians are much more likely to have witnessed racial prejudice in the past 6 months



42% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have witnessed verbal abuse of another person in the past 6 months, twice as many as the general community (22%), and are much more likely to have witnessed at least one form of prejudice, on the basis of their race.

Most notably, Indigenous respondents are more likely to have witnessed physical violence (23%) and refused entry to a venue (22%), than the general community (4% respectively).

Q. In the past 6 months, have you seen someone else experience any of the following forms of prejudice, on the basis of their race?

Indigenous Australians are much more likely to experience racial discrimination

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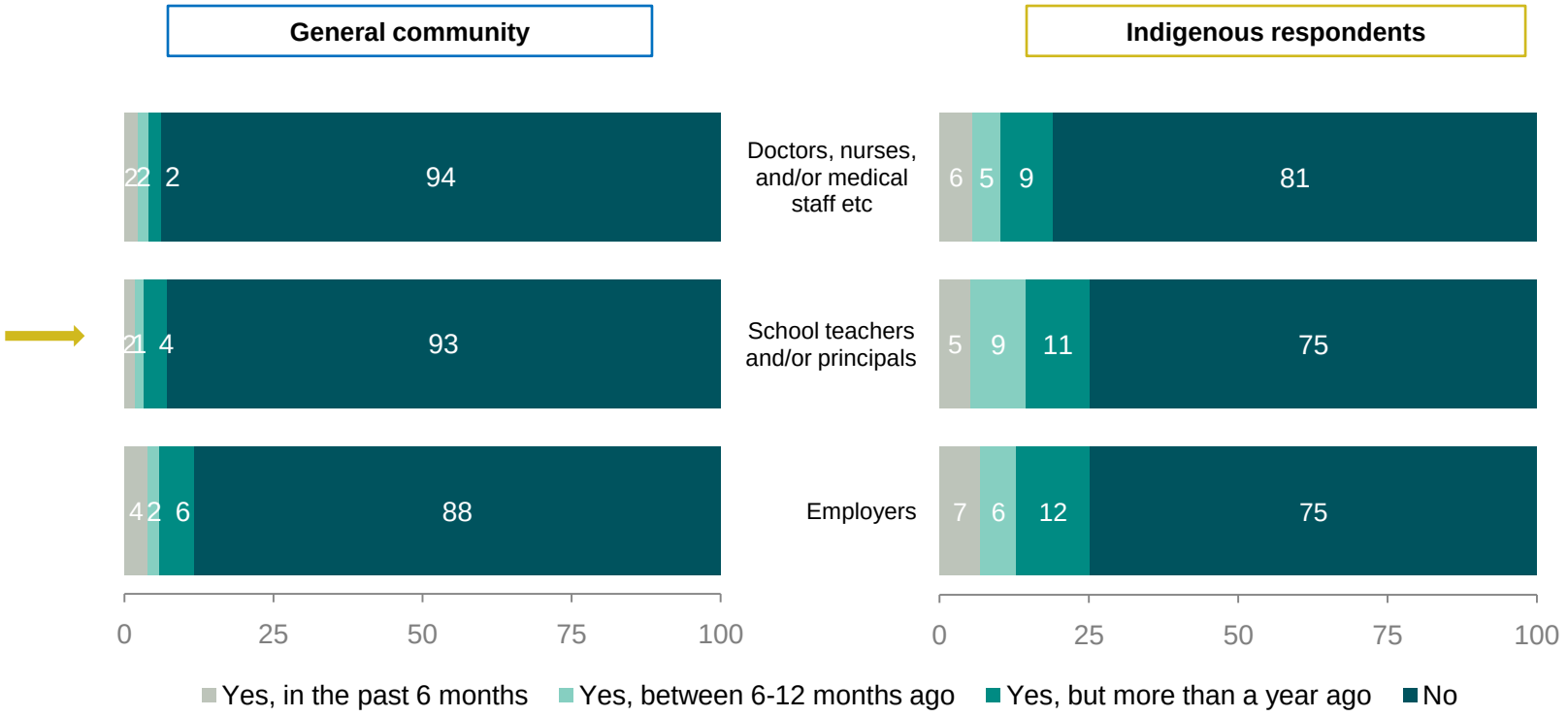
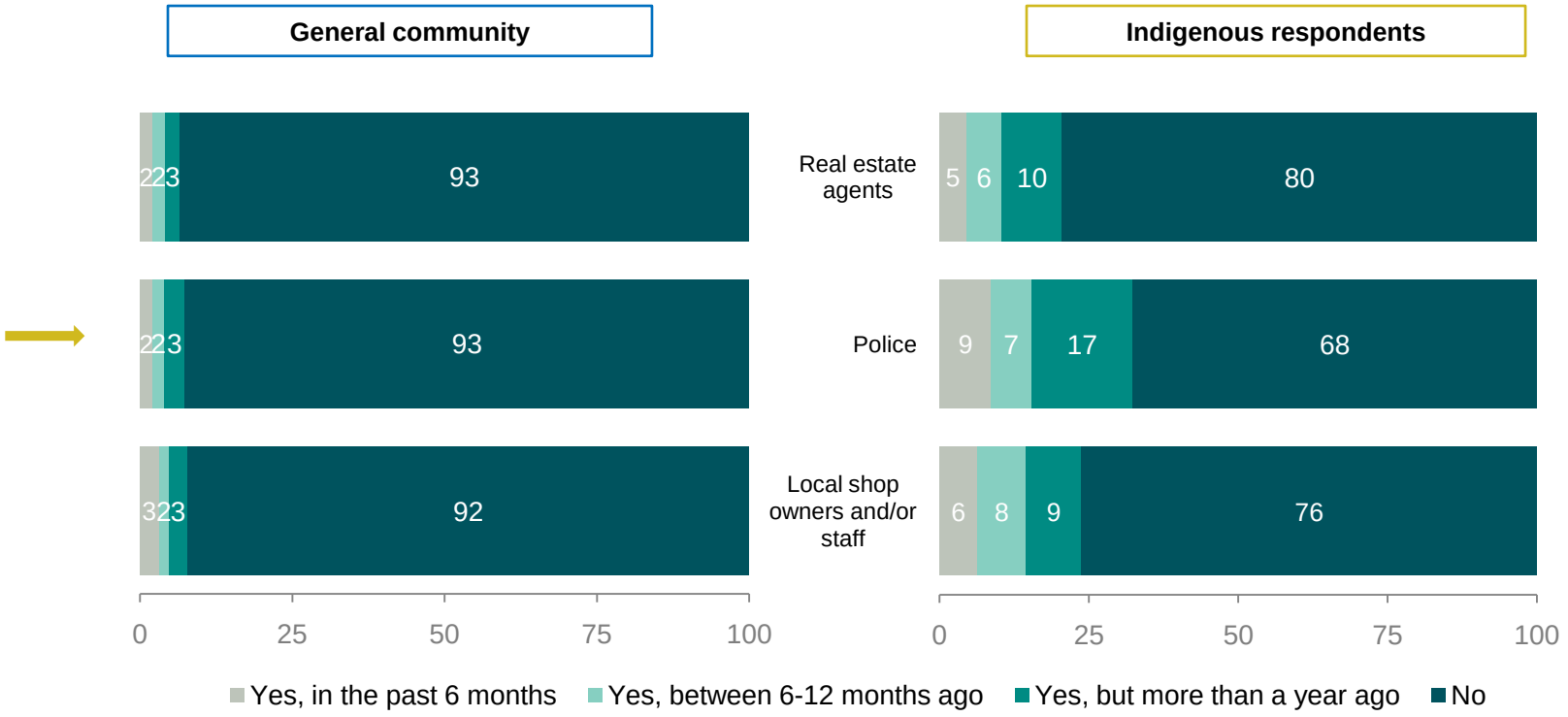


14% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have felt racially discriminated against by a school teacher and/or principal in the past 12 months, 5 times as many as the general community (3%). Indigenous Australians are also twice as likely to have experienced racial discrimination from health workers and employers, than the general community.

Q. Have you or members of your family felt racially discriminated against by any of the following groups?

Indigenous Australians are much more likely to experience racial discrimination (cont.)



14% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have felt racially discriminated against by a local shop owner and/or staff member in the past 12 months, 3 times as many as the general community (5%).

Similarly, more Indigenous respondents have experienced racial discrimination by police (16%) and real estate agents (11%) in the past year, compared to just 4% of the general community.

Q. Have you or members of your family felt racially discriminated against by any of the following groups?

Unity

How much do we all value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures?

Levels of knowledge about Indigenous history and culture 2008-2012

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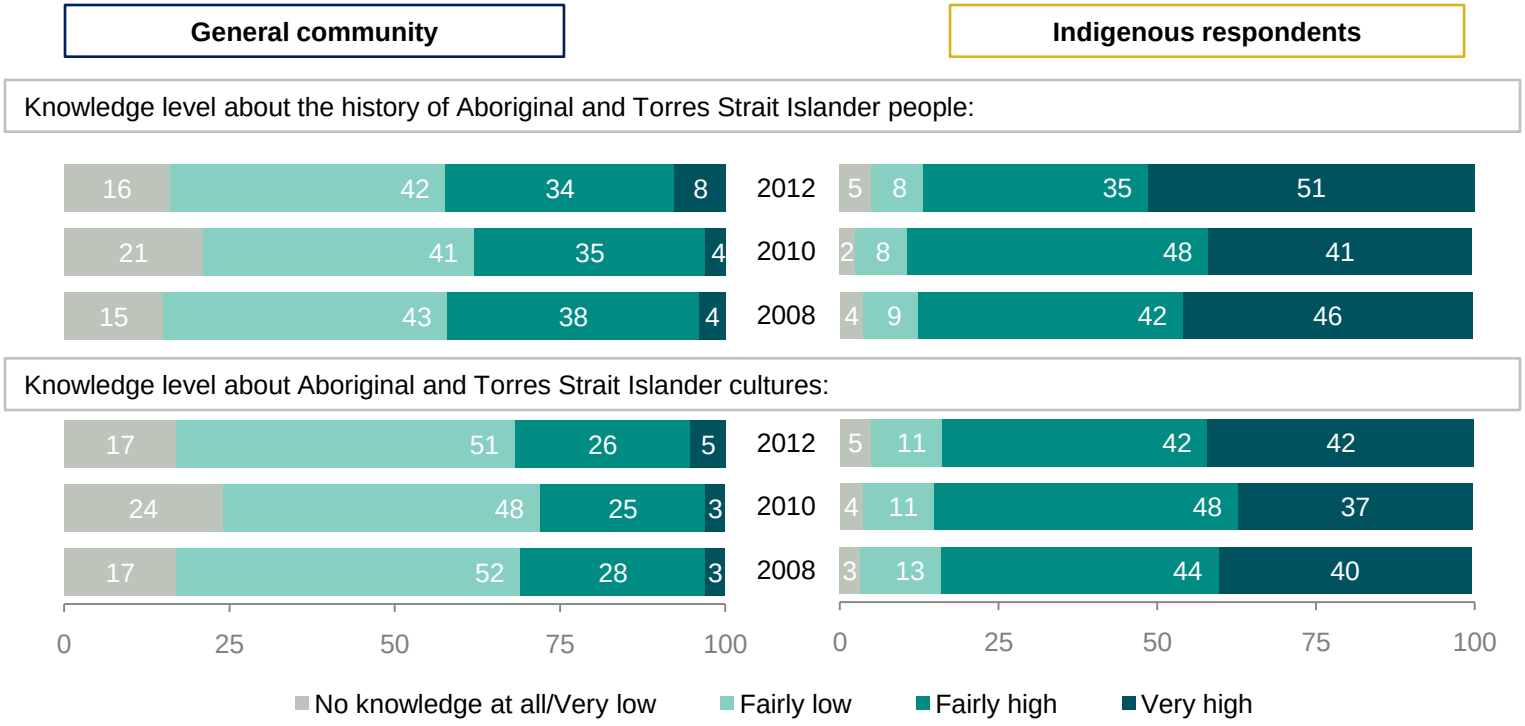

Between 2008-12, there remained a widespread lack of knowledge about Indigenous history and culture among the general community, with more than half claiming to have a low level of knowledge or none at all.

Unsurprisingly, knowledge levels among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were far higher.

Q. How would you describe your level of knowledge about the following topics?

Most Australians still largely feel they know little about Indigenous history or cultures

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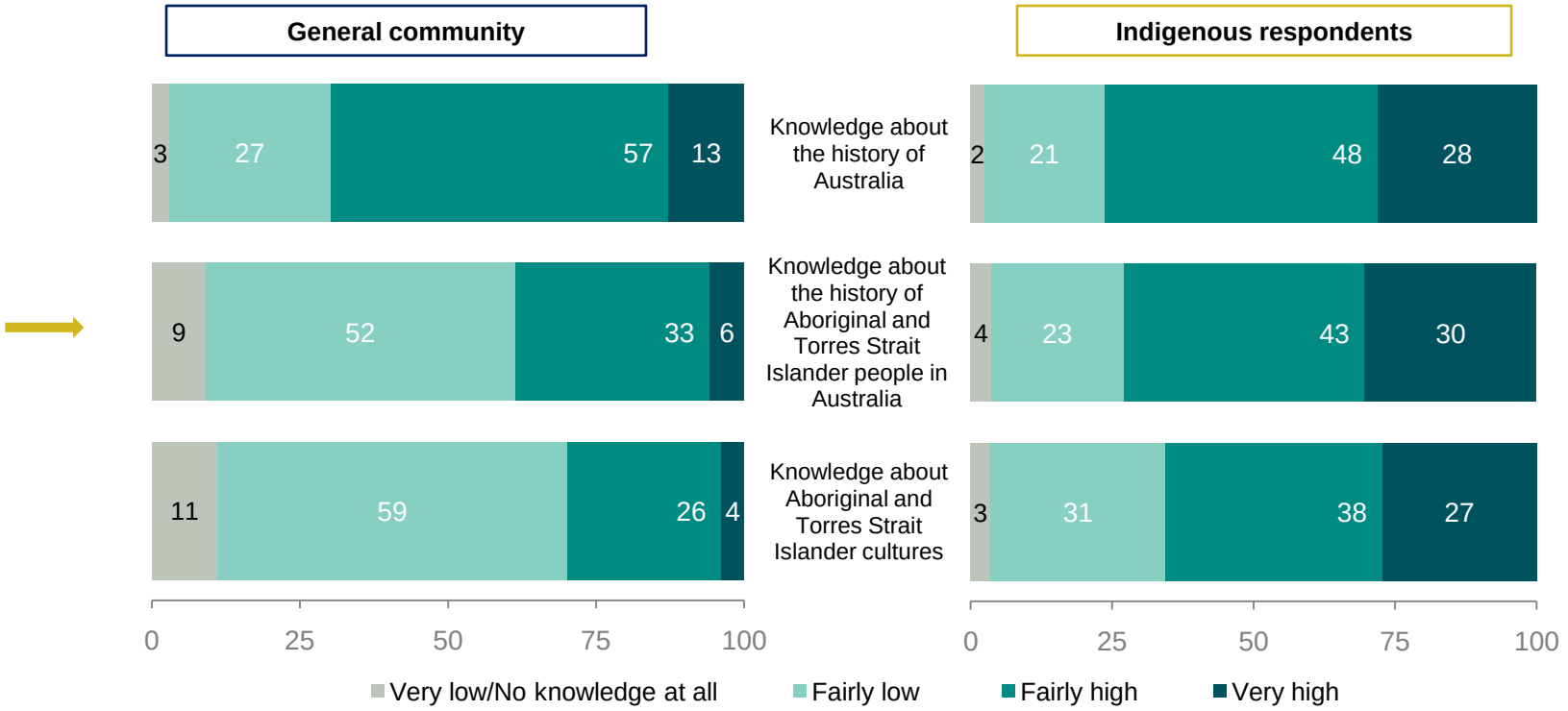

70% of the general community and 77% of Indigenous people believe they have a high level of knowledge about the history of Australia. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to have a high level of knowledge about the history of their people (73%) or their cultures (65%), than the general community (39% and 30% respectively).

The higher percentage of Indigenous respondents who feel they have a very high level of knowledge about Australian history can be seen to highlight how central Indigenous history is for them to Australian history overall.

Q. How would you describe your level of knowledge about the following topics?

Perceptions of importance of Indigenous history and culture 2008-2012

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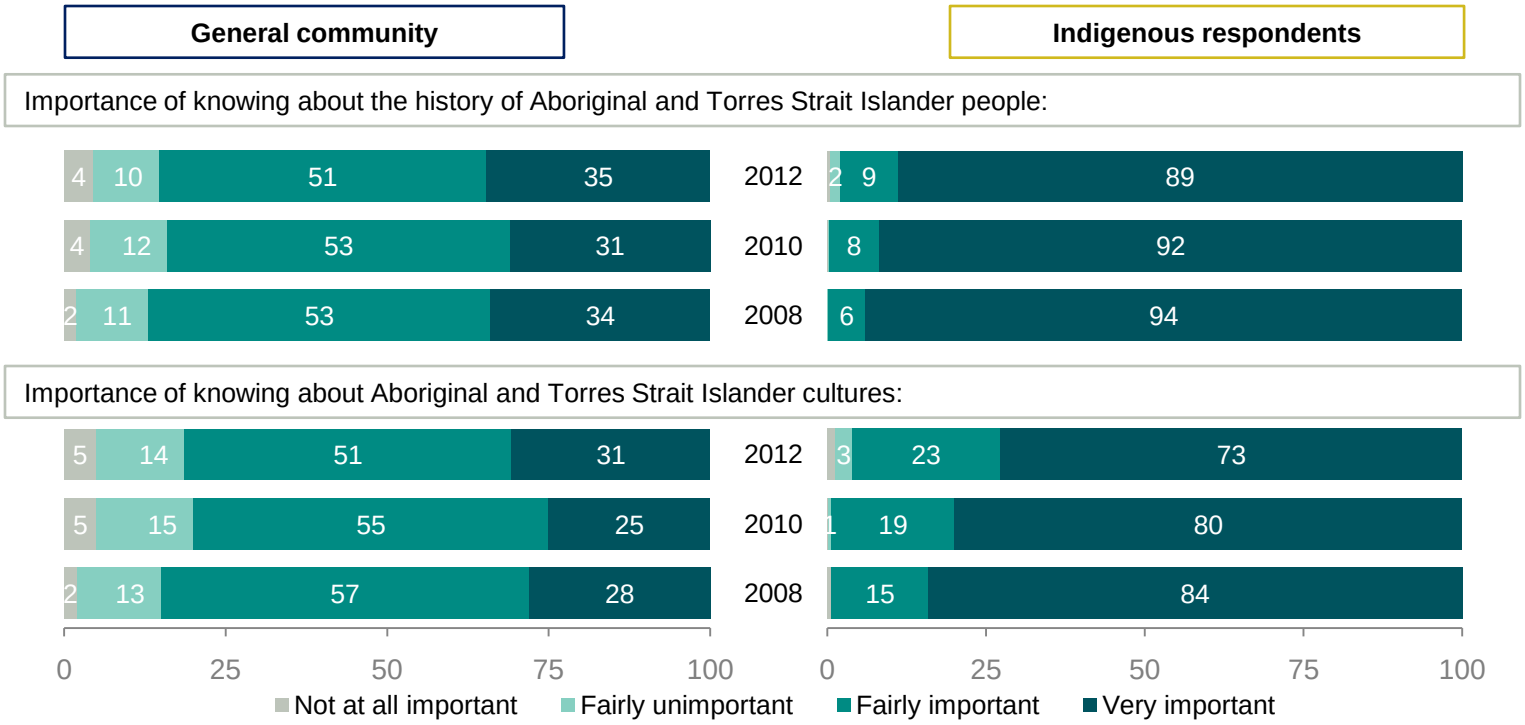

Between 2008-2012, there was widespread agreement amongst both groups that it is important for all Australians to know about Indigenous history and cultures.

However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were much more likely to consider it was very important.

Q. How important is it that all Australians know about the following topics?

Knowing and learning about Indigenous history and cultures remains important

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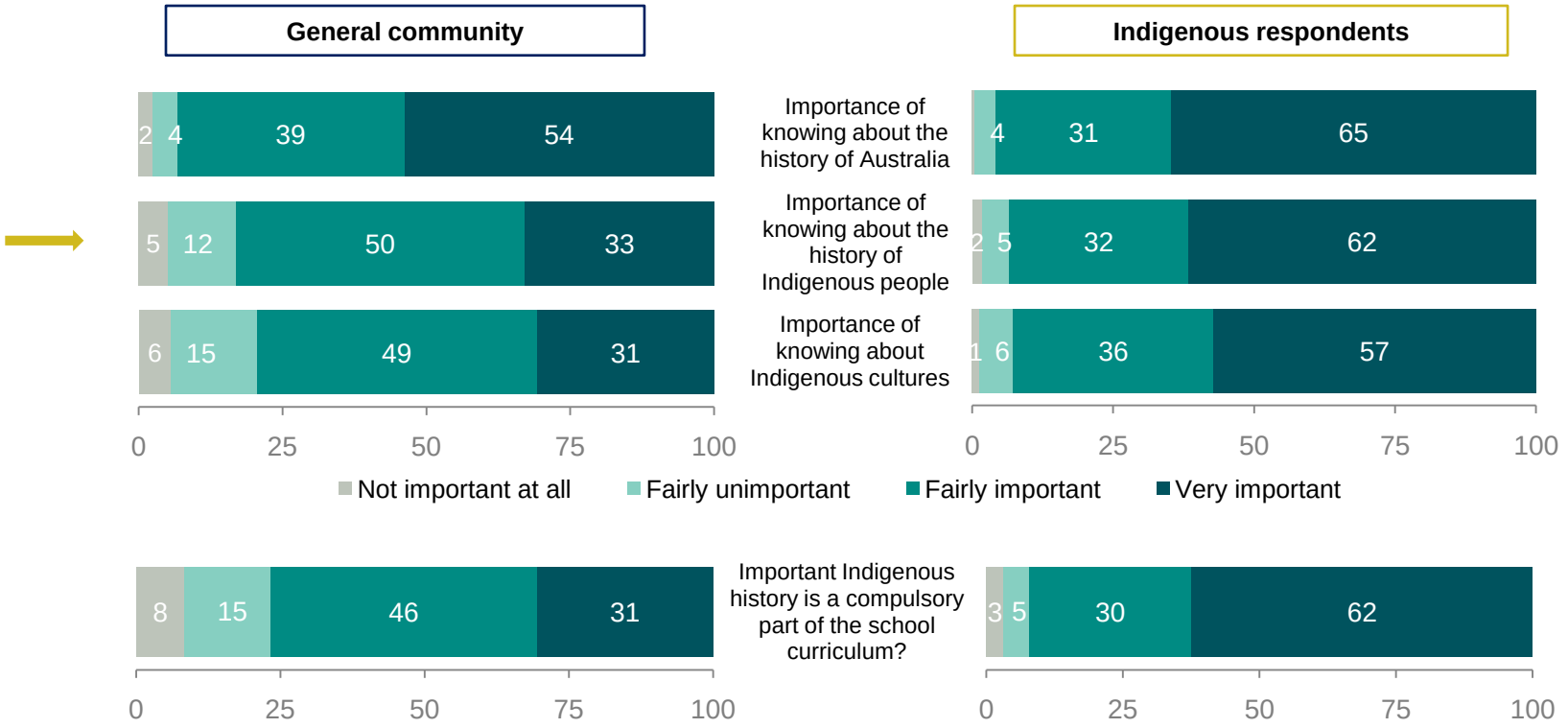
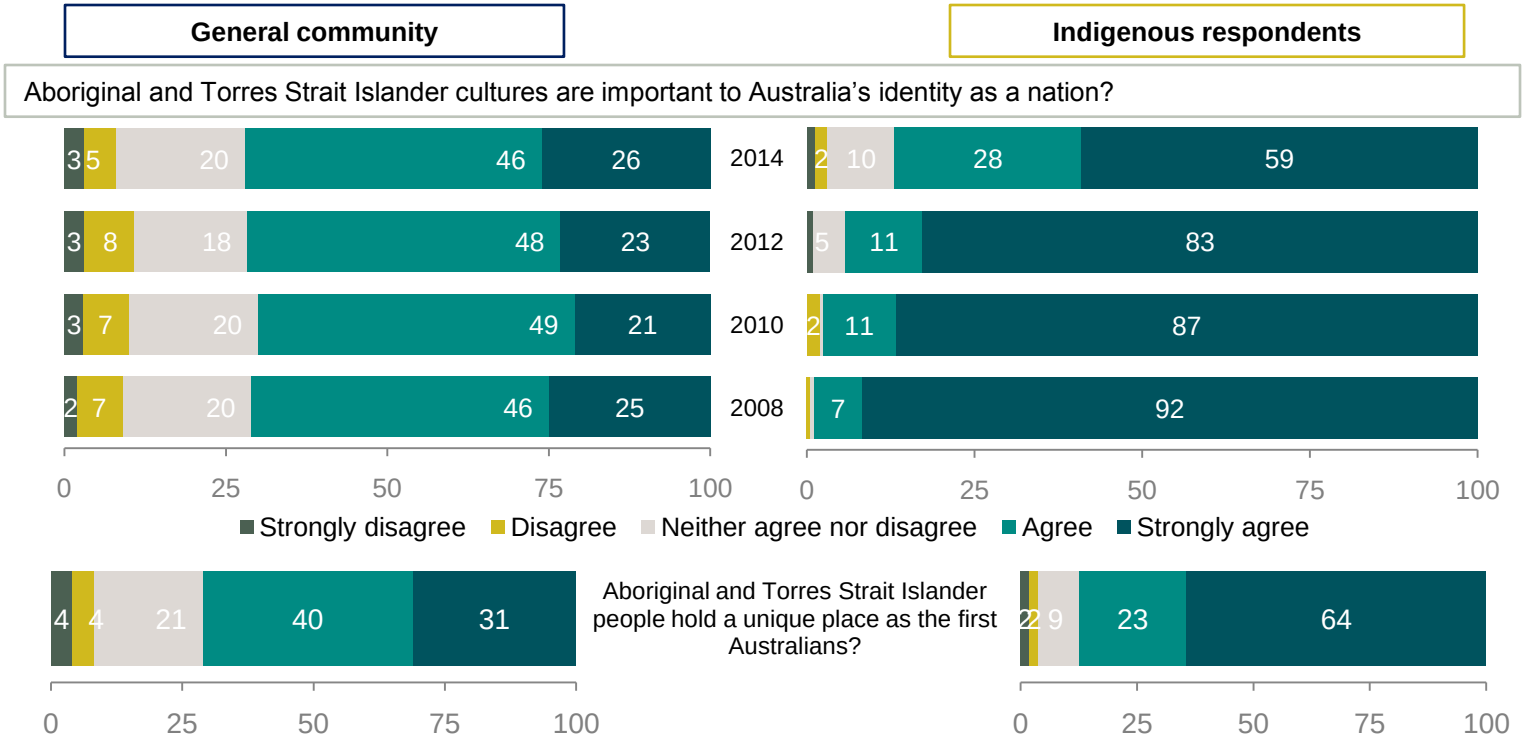


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are twice as likely to believe it is very important for all Australians to learn about the history of Indigenous people (62%) or their cultures (57%) and that Indigenous history should be compulsory in school (62%), compared to the general community (33% , 31% and 31% respectively). However, Indigenous respondents are also more likely to believe it's very important to learn about the history of Australia as a whole. Again, this perhaps underlines how Australian history and Indigenous history are inextricably linked for Indigenous people.

Q. How important is it that all Australians know about the following topics?
Q. Is it important or not for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history to be a compulsory part of the school curriculum?

We widely agree Indigenous people hold a unique and important place in the national identity



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be more likely to strongly agree (59%) that their cultures are important for Australia's national identity, compared to the general community (26%).

These sentiments are in line with respective levels of agreement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold a unique place as the first Australians.

Q. As an Australian, or as someone living in Australia, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.
Q. Do you agree or disagree that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold a unique place as the first Australians?

Most Australians remain proud of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

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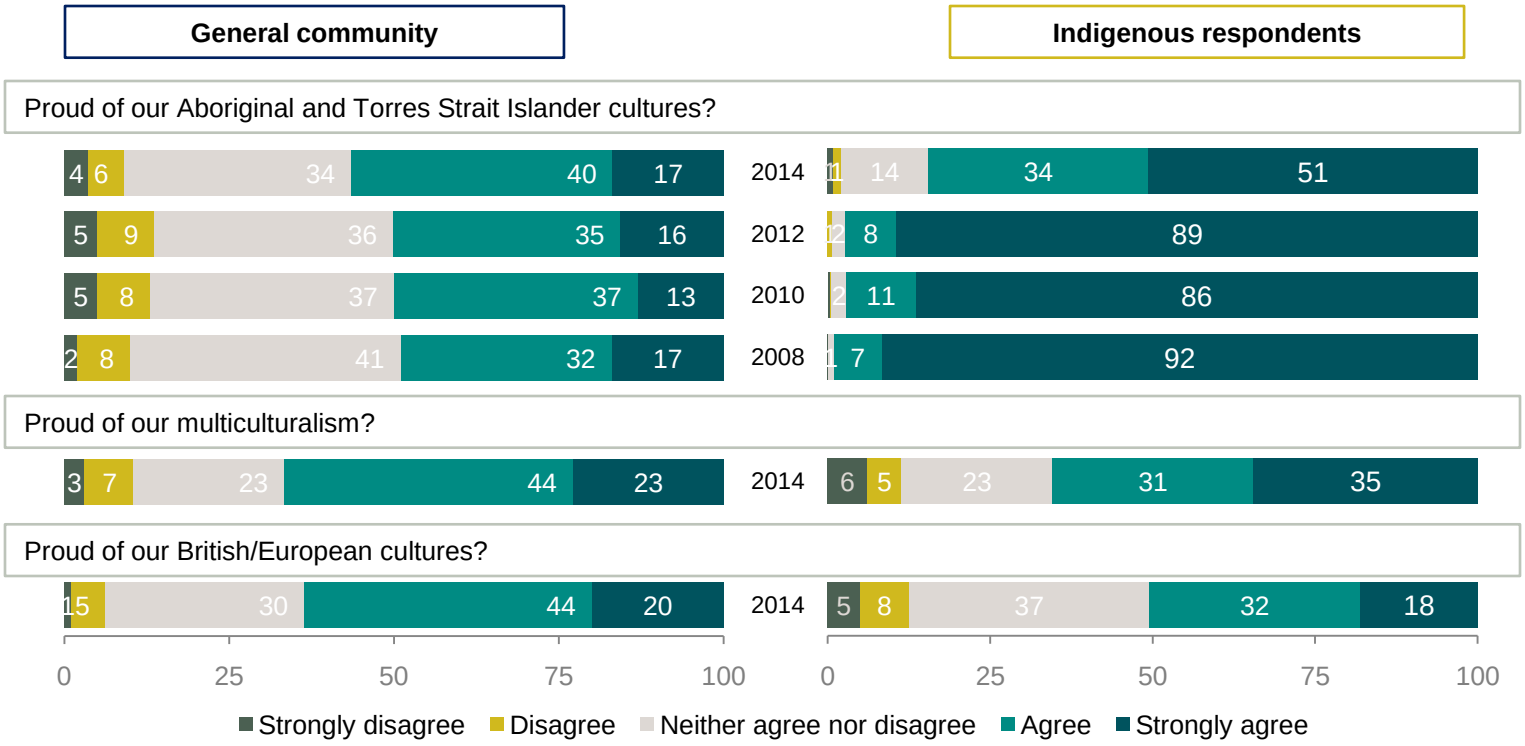

The general community are more likely to agree they are proud of Australia's multiculturalism (67%) or British and European cultures (64%) than they are of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures (57%).

Conversely, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are much more likely to agree they are proud of their cultures (85%), although there has again been a softening in this regard with fewer now strongly agreeing. Indigenous respondents also mostly agree they are proud of Australia's multiculturalism (66%) and British/European cultures (50%).

Q. As an Australian, or as someone living in Australia, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

We mostly continue to think the 2008 Apology has improved the relationship

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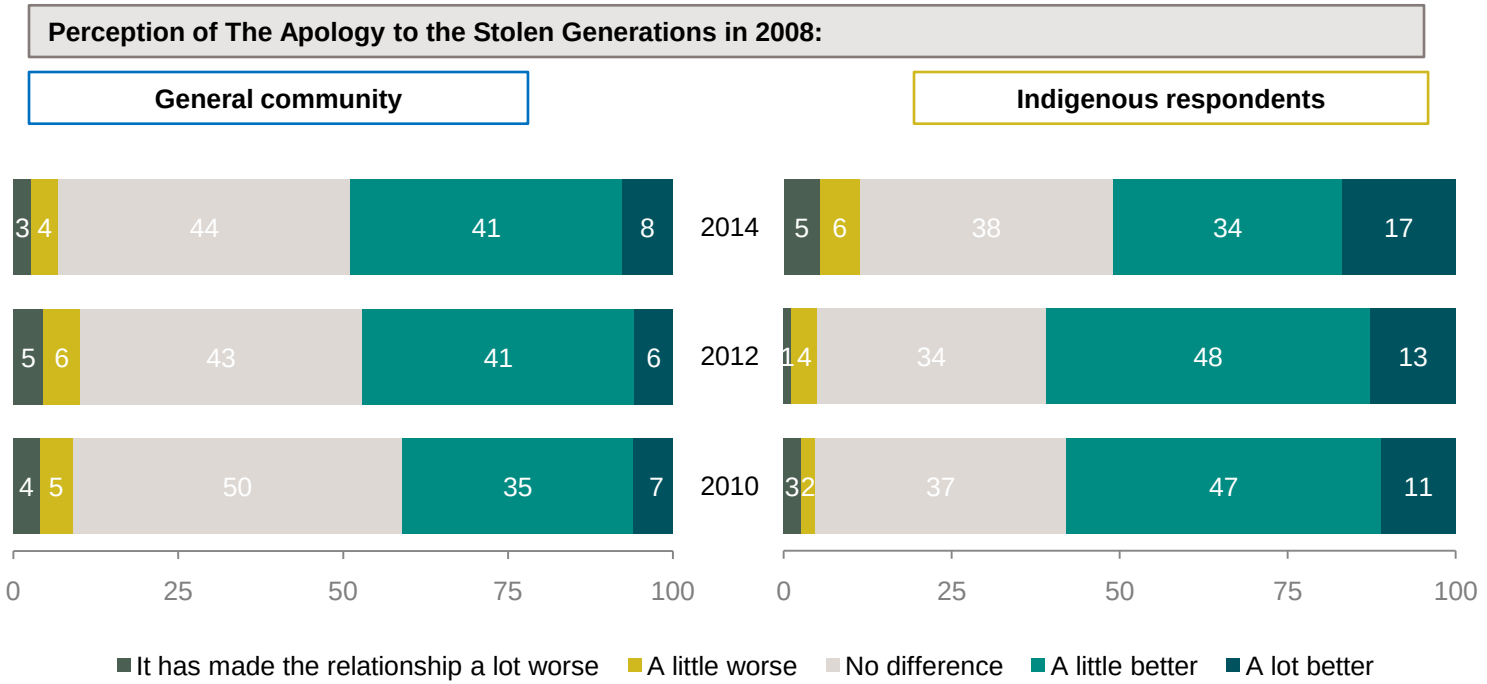

49% of the general community believe the 2008 Apology to the stolen generations has made the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians better, similar to 51% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

However, while the general community sentiment has remained constant since 2012, Indigenous respondents are not so sure anymore, with an increase in those who now believe it has made the relationship worse. This perhaps highlights how the 'halo' effect of the Apology has now waned significantly for the Indigenous community.

Q. In February 2008, the Australian Parliament apologised to members of the stolen generations for past government policies that separated many Indigenous people from their families and homelands. What effect, if any, do you think this apology has had on the relationship between Indigenous people and other Australians?

Indigenous Australians are most likely to want things done to improve reconciliation

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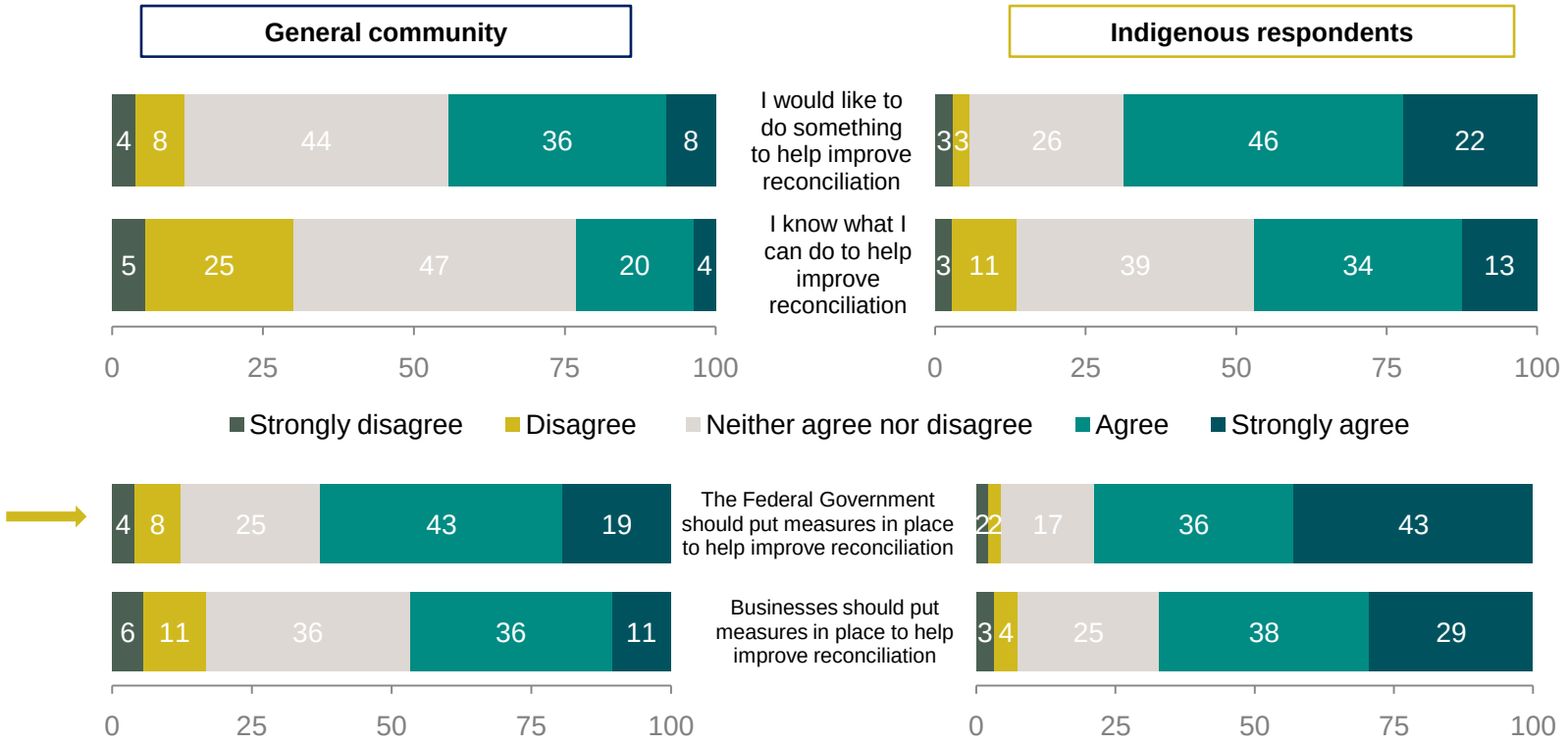

Both the general community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to *want* to do something to help improve reconciliation than they are to *know* exactly what they can do.

However, Indigenous respondents are much more likely to strongly agree the Federal Government (43%) and businesses (29%) should help improve reconciliation, than the general community (19% and 11% respectively).

Q. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

We agree ANZAC Day could celebrate Australia's national unity with more shared ceremonies

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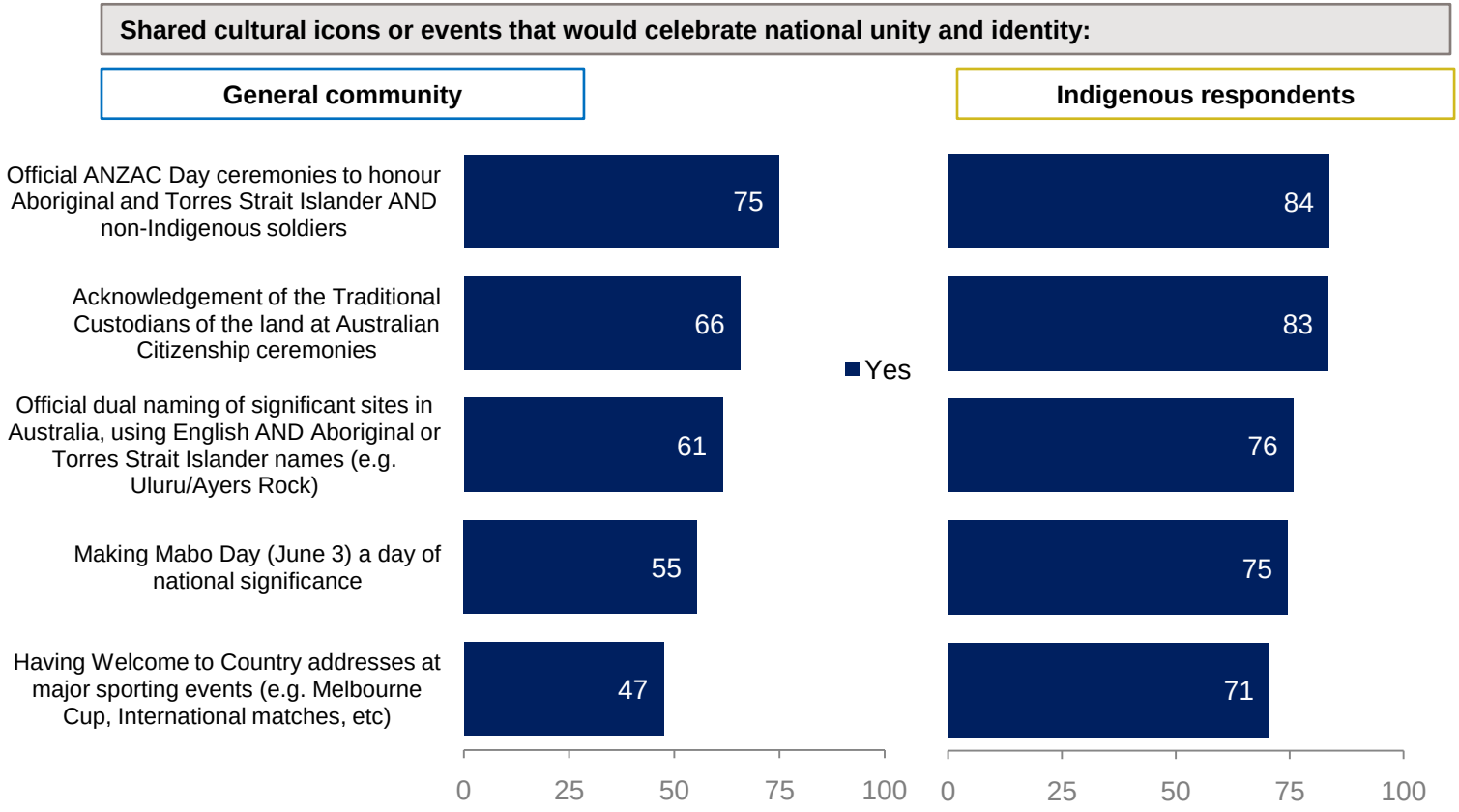

Both the general community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people largely believe a range of things could become shared icons that celebrate a national unity and identity, particularly official ANZAC ceremonies to honour both non-Indigenous and Indigenous soldiers. There is also widespread agreement for Acknowledging Country at citizenship ceremonies and for official dual naming of significant sites and landmarks.

Q. Many countries have shared cultural icons or events that celebrate their national unity and identity. Do you feel the following changes/events would celebrate this unity in Australia?

We mostly think more needs to be done to reduce problems of prejudice

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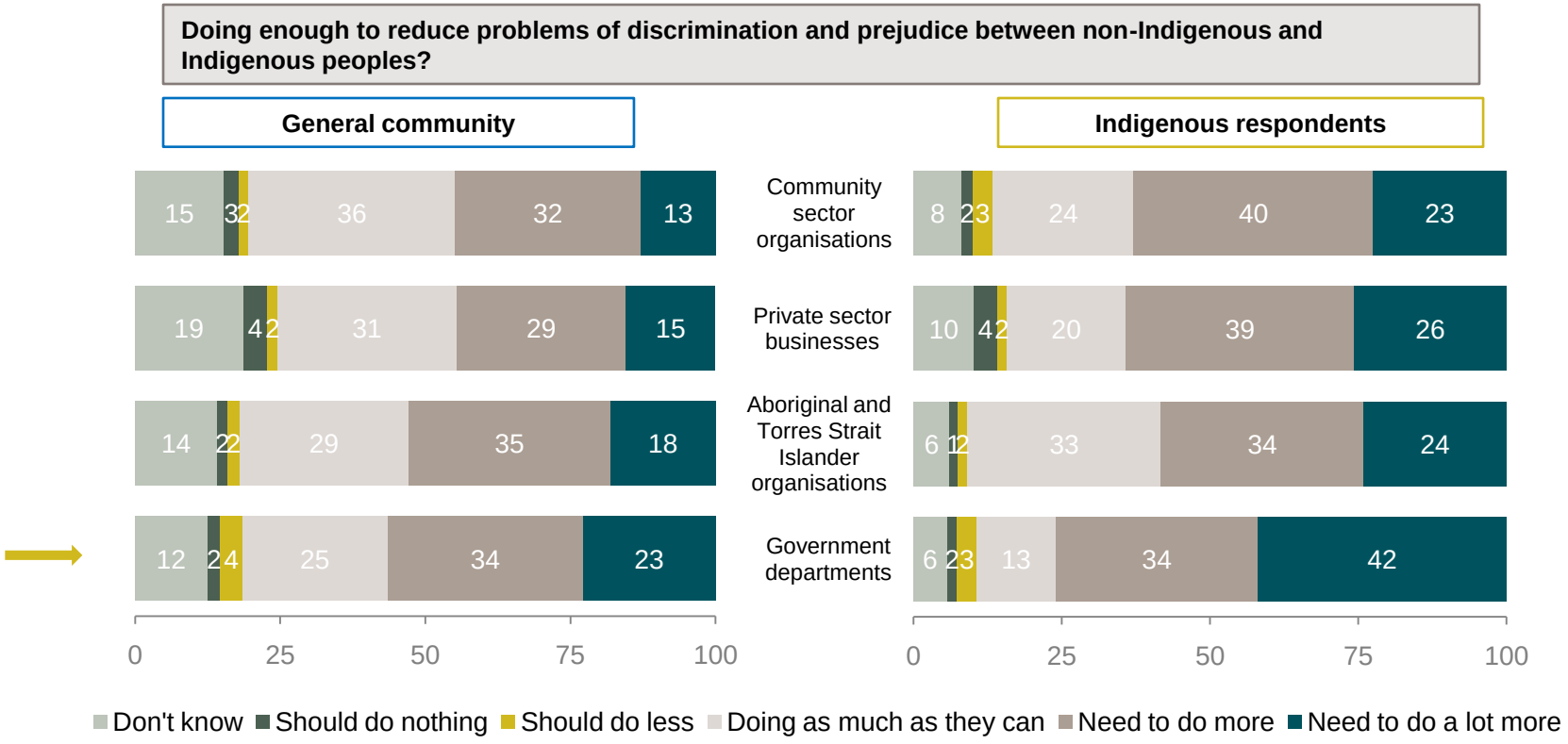

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to think that various organisations need to do more to reduce problems of prejudice in Australia, than the general community. In particular, Indigenous respondents more widely believe Government (42%) and the business sector (26%) need to do a lot more, than the general community (23% and 15% respectively). Indigenous people are also more likely to believe their own organisations need to do a lot more.

Q. Are the following groups doing enough to reduce problems of discrimination and prejudice between non-Indigenous people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

We mostly think more needs to be done to create a stronger relationship

POLITY
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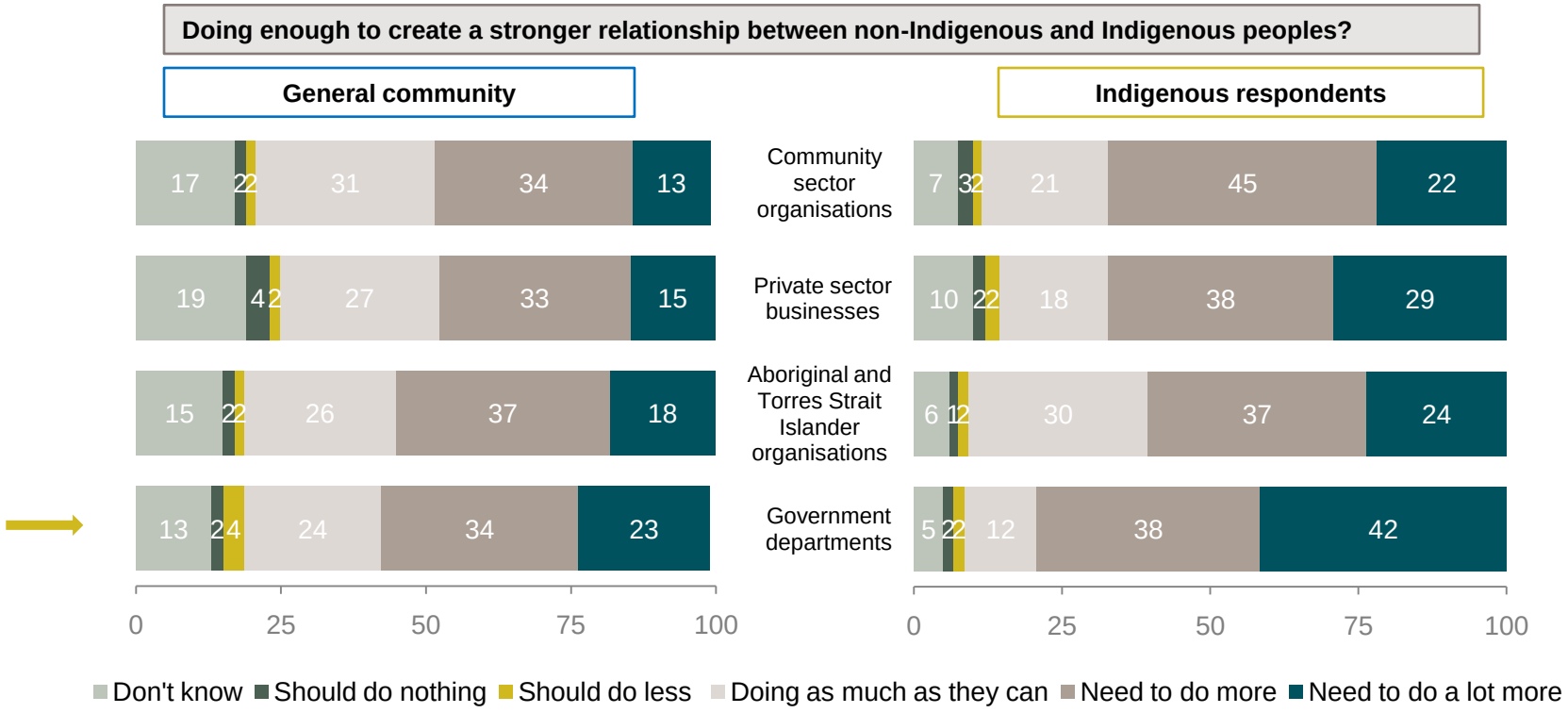

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to think that various organisations need to do more to create a stronger relationship among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, than the general community. In particular, Indigenous respondents more widely believe Government (42%) and the business sector (29%) need to do a lot more, than the general community (23% and 15% respectively). Indigenous people are also more likely to believe their own organisations need to do a lot more.

Q. Are the following groups doing enough to create a stronger relationship between non-Indigenous people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Material Equity and Cultural Security

How do we feel about our living standards and is enough being done to close the gap?

Racial/cultural differences are seen as the biggest cause of social divisions in Australia

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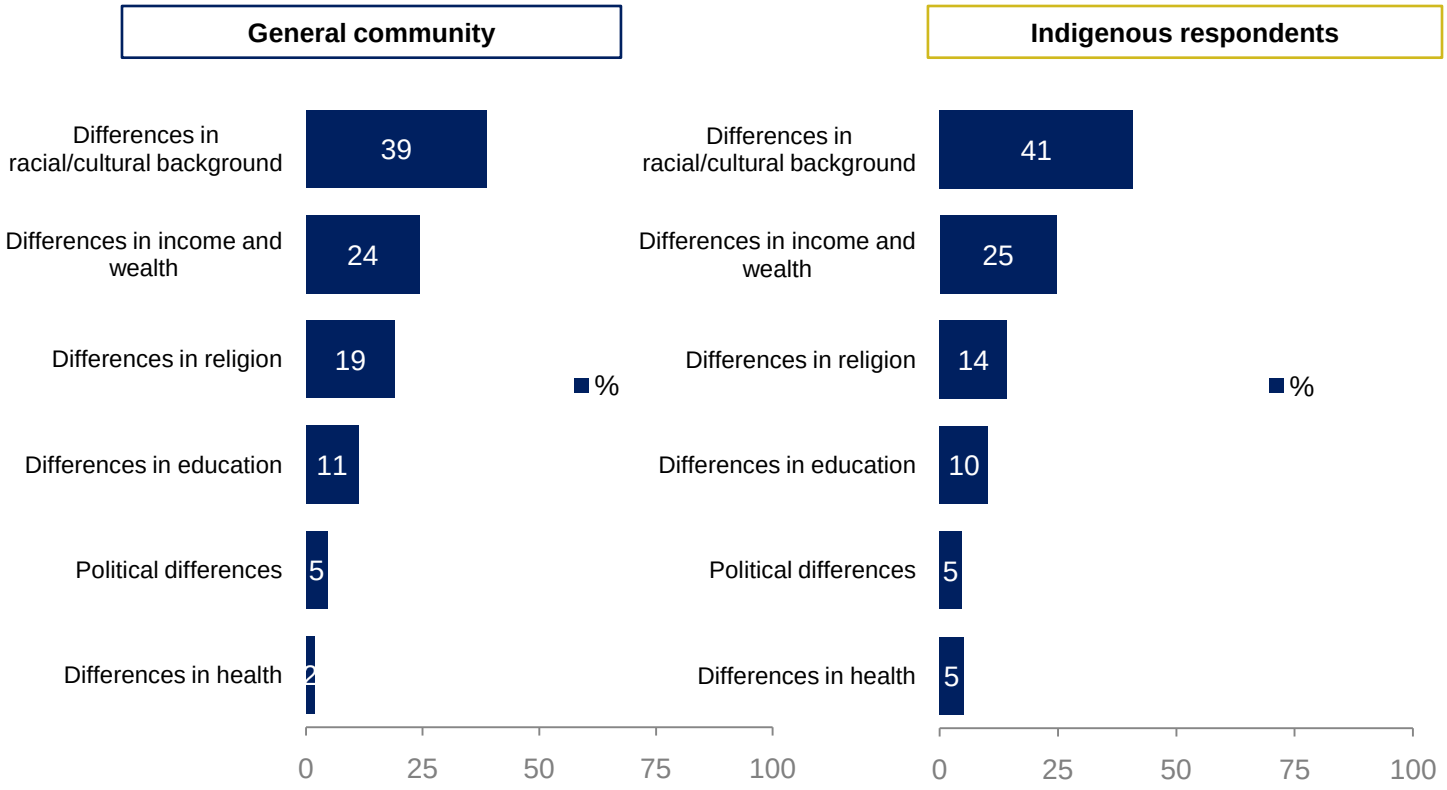
RESEARCH & CONSULTING

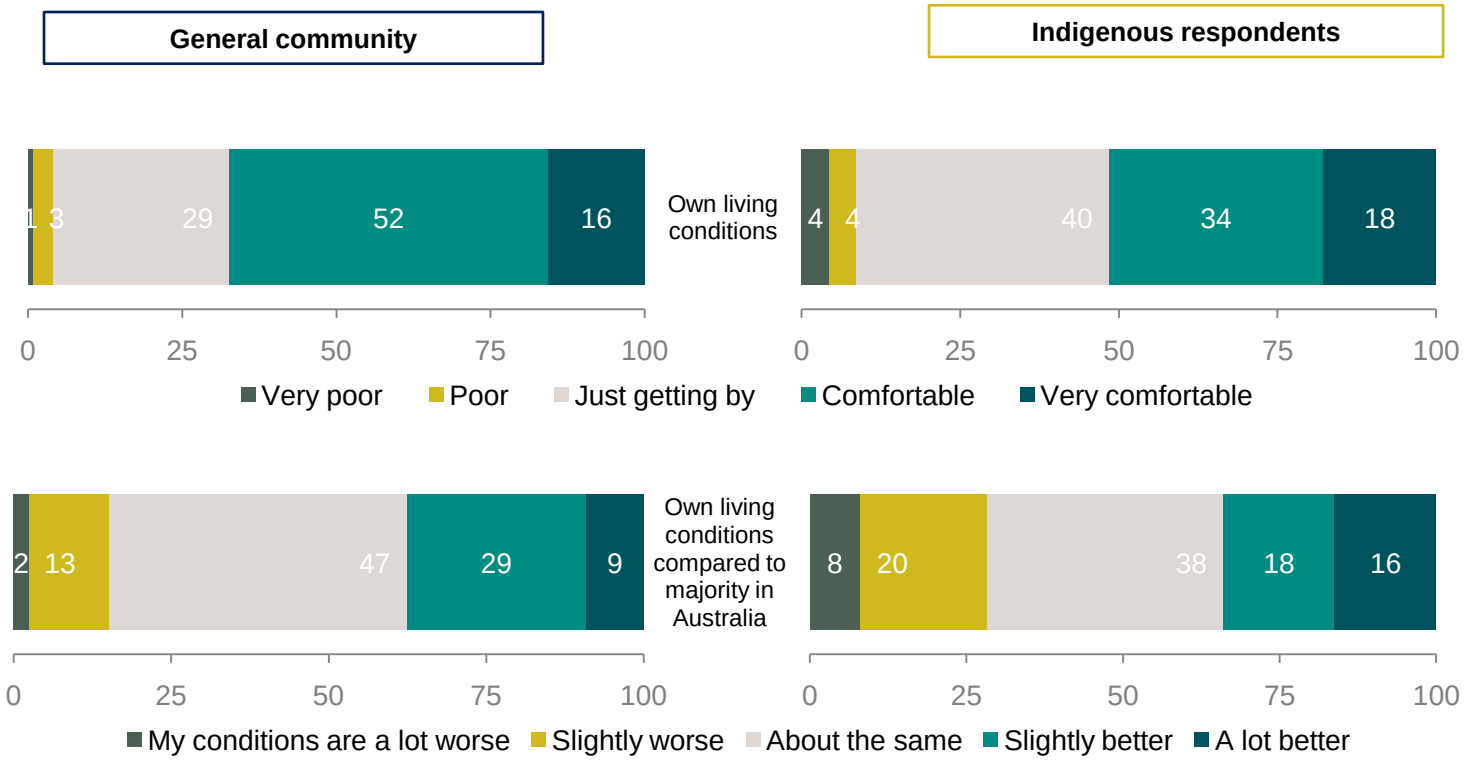


Difference in racial/cultural backgrounds is mostly widely as the biggest cause of divisions in our society, by both the general community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Difference in income and wealth is also cited as the biggest cause by 1 in 4 people among both groups.

Q. What is the biggest cause of divisions between people in Australia?

Indigenous Australians are twice as likely to consider their living conditions are worse than most peoples'

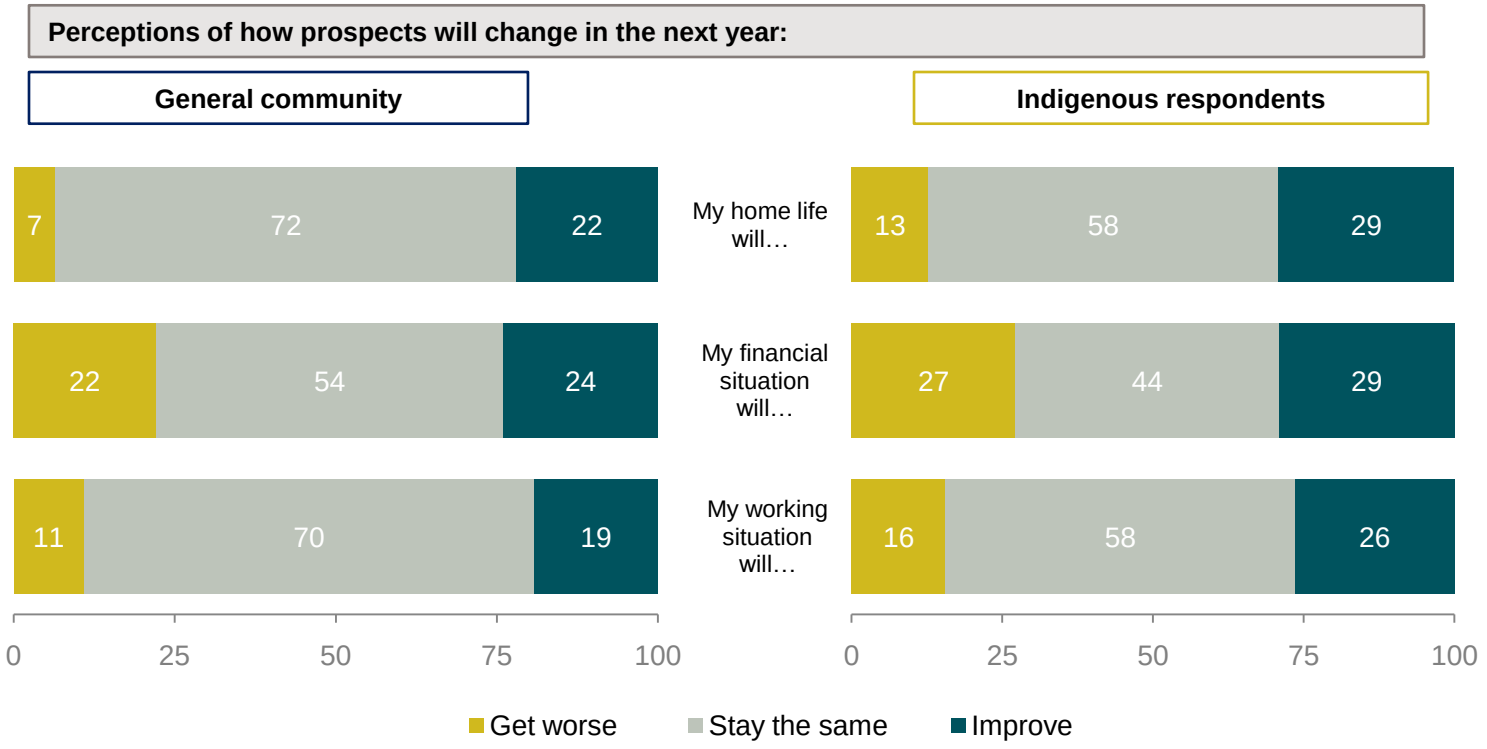
POLITY
RESEARCH & CONSULTING



68% of the general community consider their own living conditions to be comfortable, compared with 52% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, while 47% of the general public consider their own living conditions to be about the same as the majority of people in Australia, 38% of Indigenous respondents feel that way. It is notable that a higher percentage of Indigenous people (16%) thinks their living standard is a "lot better" than the majority's. This may highlight how many Indigenous people live in communities with greater extremes of living standards, making their own relatively better.

Q. How would you describe your own living conditions?
Q. How do you feel your living conditions compare with the majority of people in Australia?

Indigenous Australians are more likely to feel their prospects will change for the worse or better

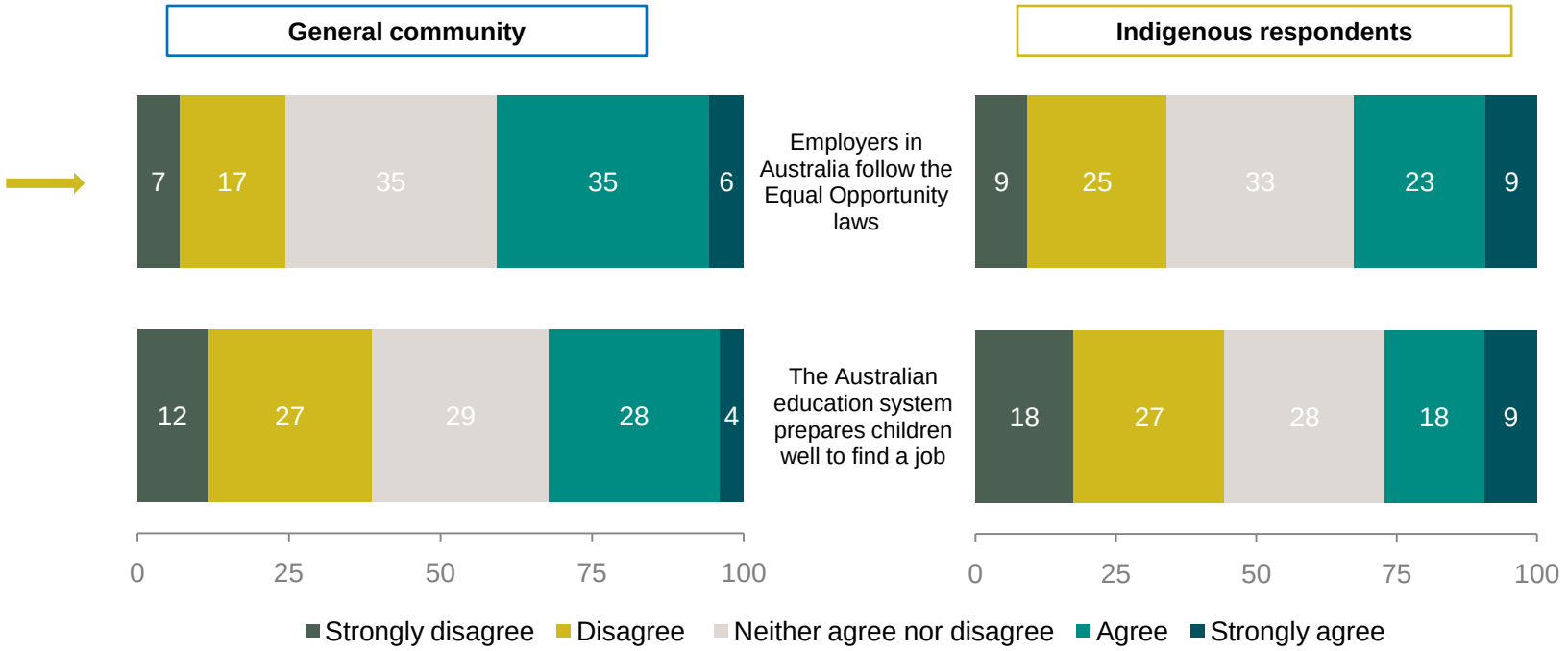


Both the general and community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people largely think their prospects for next year will stay the same. However, Indigenous respondents are more likely to think that their conditions will either get worse or improve, in terms of home life, financial situation and working situation. This perhaps underlines how for the majority of people in the general community, a stable lifestyle is much more common.

Q. Thinking ahead 12 months, how do you see your prospects will change in the following areas?

Indigenous Australians more widely see employment barriers in terms of education and equal opportunity

POLITY
RESEARCH & CONSULTING



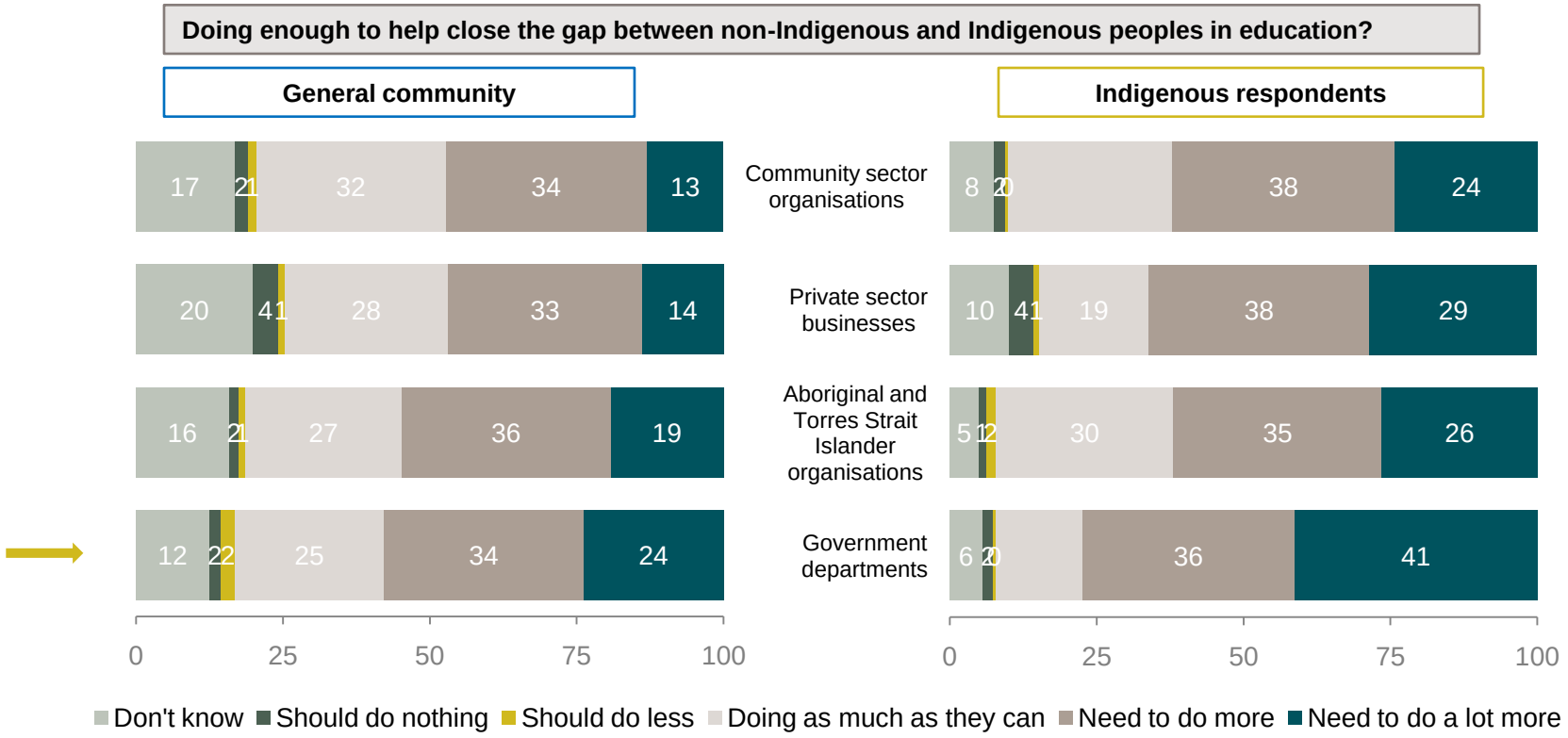
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to feel that employers in Australia do not follow equal opportunity laws and practices (34%), compared with the general community (24%).

Similarly, Indigenous respondents more widely disagree (45%) that the education system prepares children well for employment, than the general community (39%).

Q. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

We mostly think more needs to be done in areas of education to close the gap

POLITY
RESEARCH & CONSULTING



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to think that various organisations need to do more in areas of education, to help close the gap, than the general community. In particular, Indigenous respondents more widely believe government (41%) and the business sector (29%) need to do a lot more, than the general community (24% and 14% respectively). Indigenous people are also more likely to believe their own organisations need to do a lot more.

Q. Are the following groups doing enough to help close the gap between non-Indigenous people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in areas of education?

We mostly think more needs to be done in areas of health to close the gap

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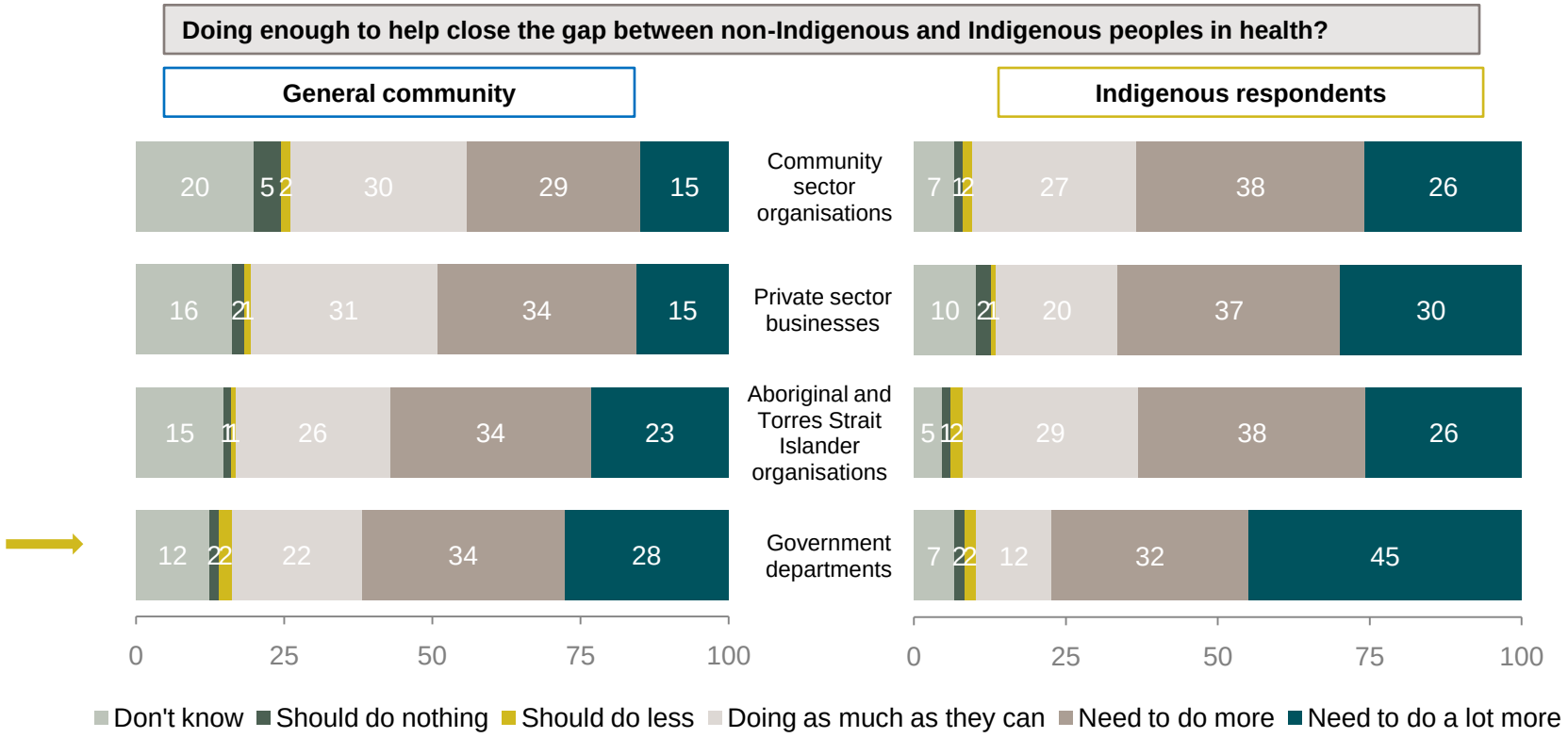
RESEARCH & CONSULTING



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to think that various organisations need to do more in areas of health, to help close the gap, than the general community. In particular, Indigenous respondents more widely believe government (45%) and the business sector (30%) need to do a lot more, than the general community (28% and 15% respectively). Indigenous people are slightly more likely to believe their own organisations are doing as much as they can, in this regard.

Q. Are the following groups doing enough to help close the gap between non-Indigenous people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in areas of health?

We mostly think more needs to be done in areas of employment to close the gap

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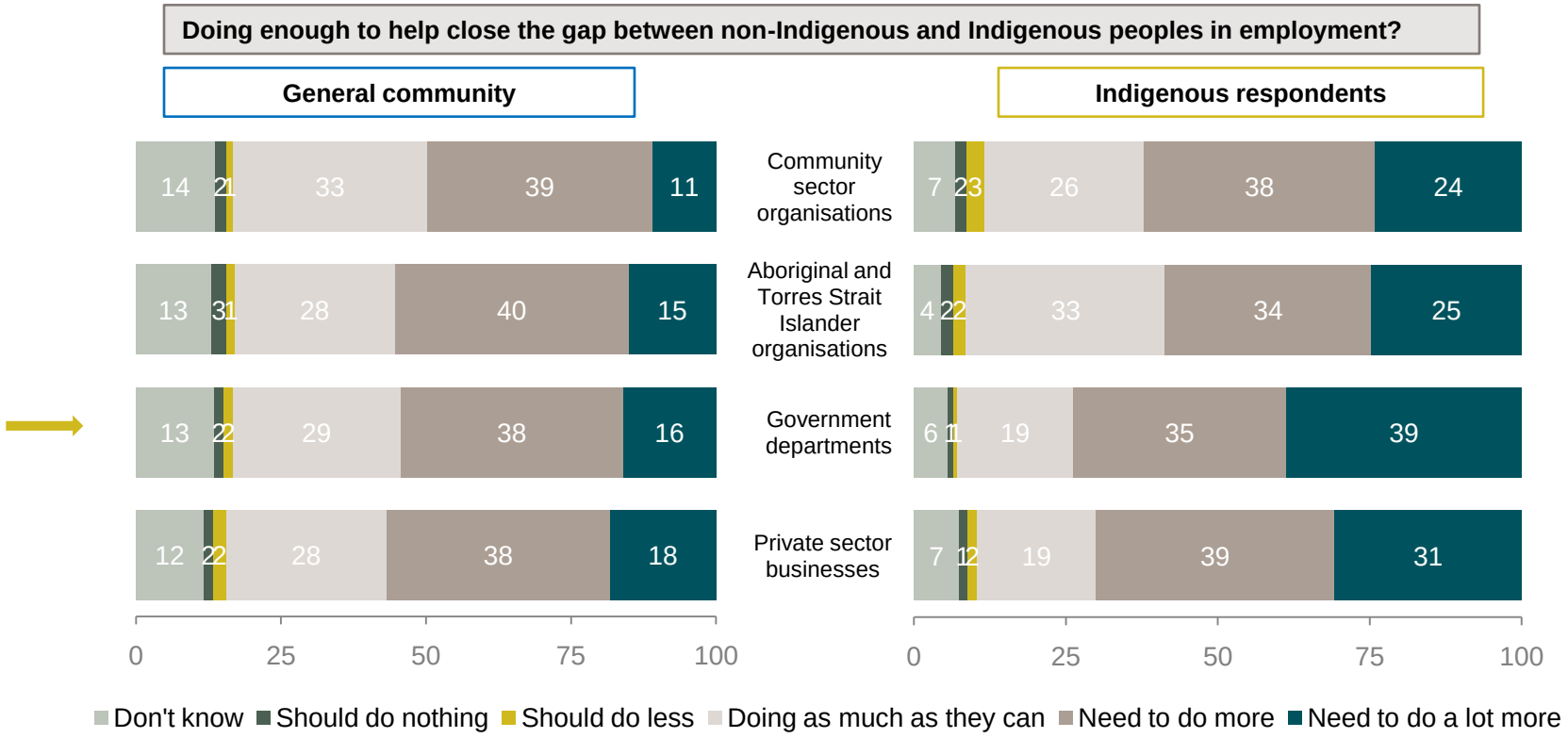
RESEARCH & CONSULTING



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to think that various organisations need to do more in areas of employment, to help close the gap, than the general community. In particular, Indigenous respondents more widely believe government (39%) and the business sector (31%) need to do a lot more, than the general community (18% and 15% respectively). Indigenous people are also more likely to believe their own organisations need to do a lot more.

Q. Are the following groups doing enough to help close the gap between non-Indigenous people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in areas of employment?

Indigenous Australians more often feel they can't be true to their culture or personal beliefs

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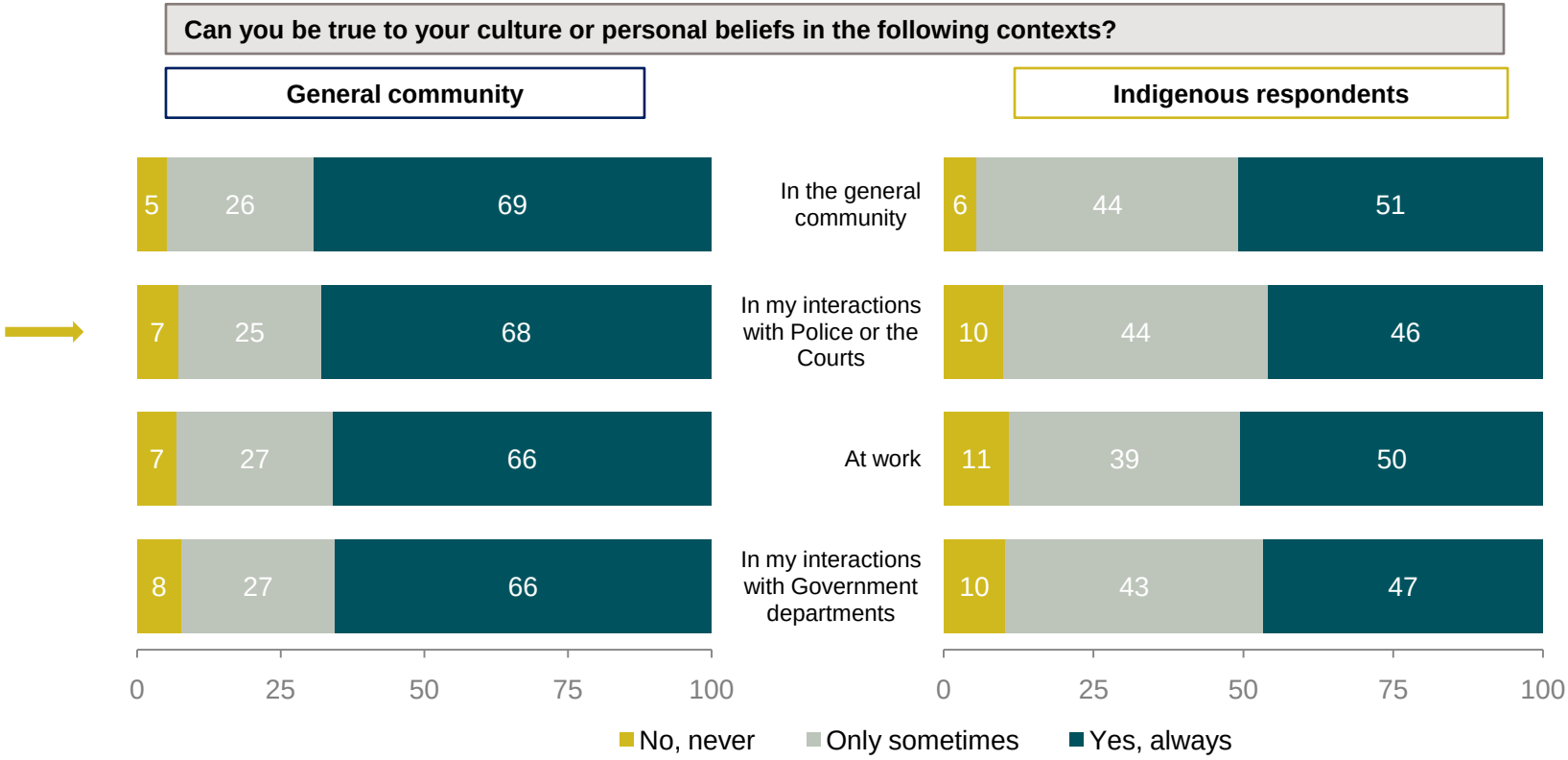

The general community are more likely to believe they can be true to their own culture or personal believes in various contexts, than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In particular, Indigenous respondents more widely feel they can never or only sometimes can be themselves in their interactions with government (53%), or in interactions with law and order officials (54%), than the general public (35% and 32% respectively). Indigenous people are also more likely to believe they can't always be themselves in the general community.

Q. Do you feel you can be true to culture or personal beliefs in the following contexts?

Indigenous Australians more often feel they don't have the right to raise their issues

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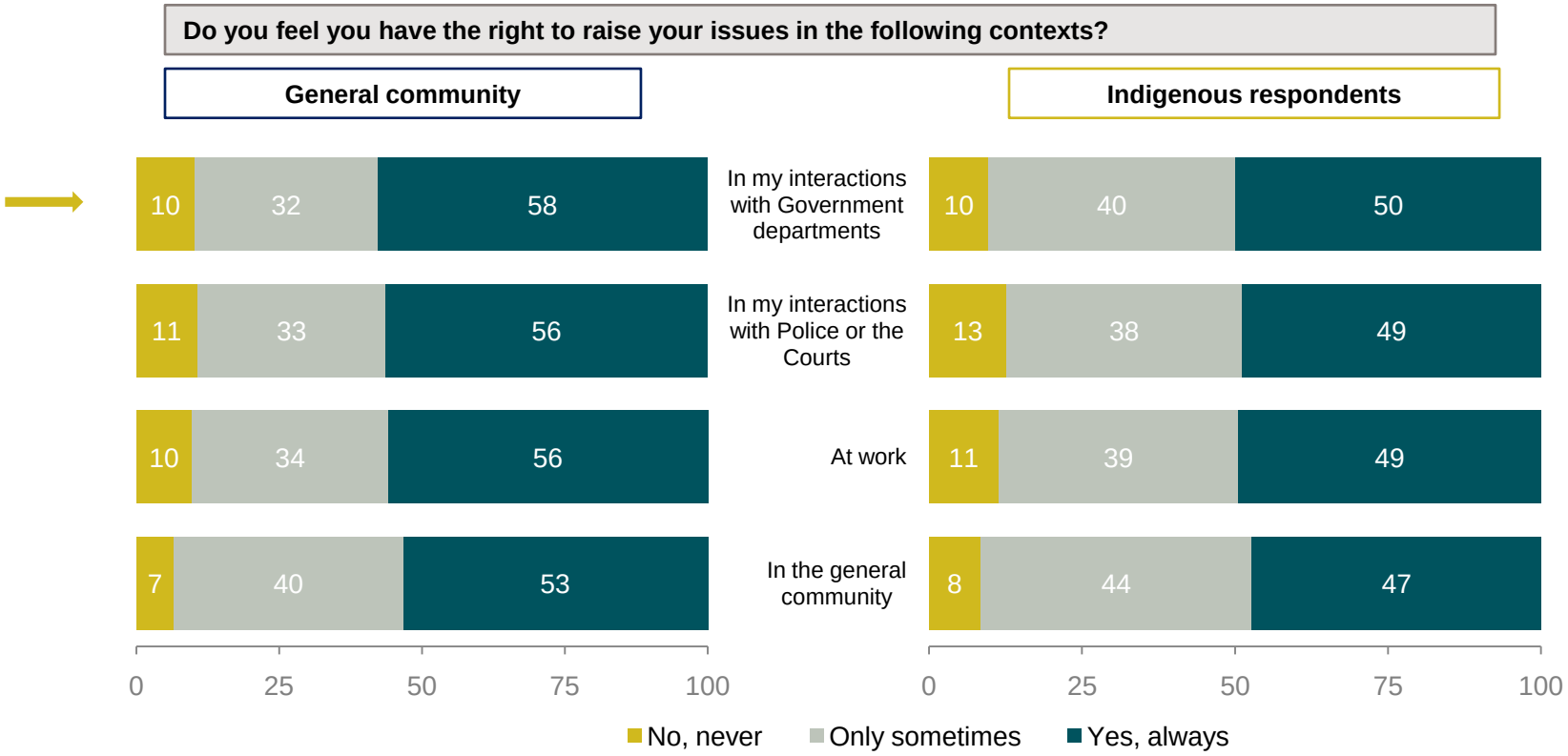

The general community are more likely to believe they have the right to raise their issues in various contexts, than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In particular, Indigenous respondents more widely feel they never or only sometimes have this right in their interactions with government (50%), or in interactions with law and order officials (51%), than the general public (42% and 44% respectively).

Q. If you feel unhappy about something, do you feel you have the right to raise your issues in the following contexts?

Indigenous Australians more often feel they don't have the opportunity to raise their issues

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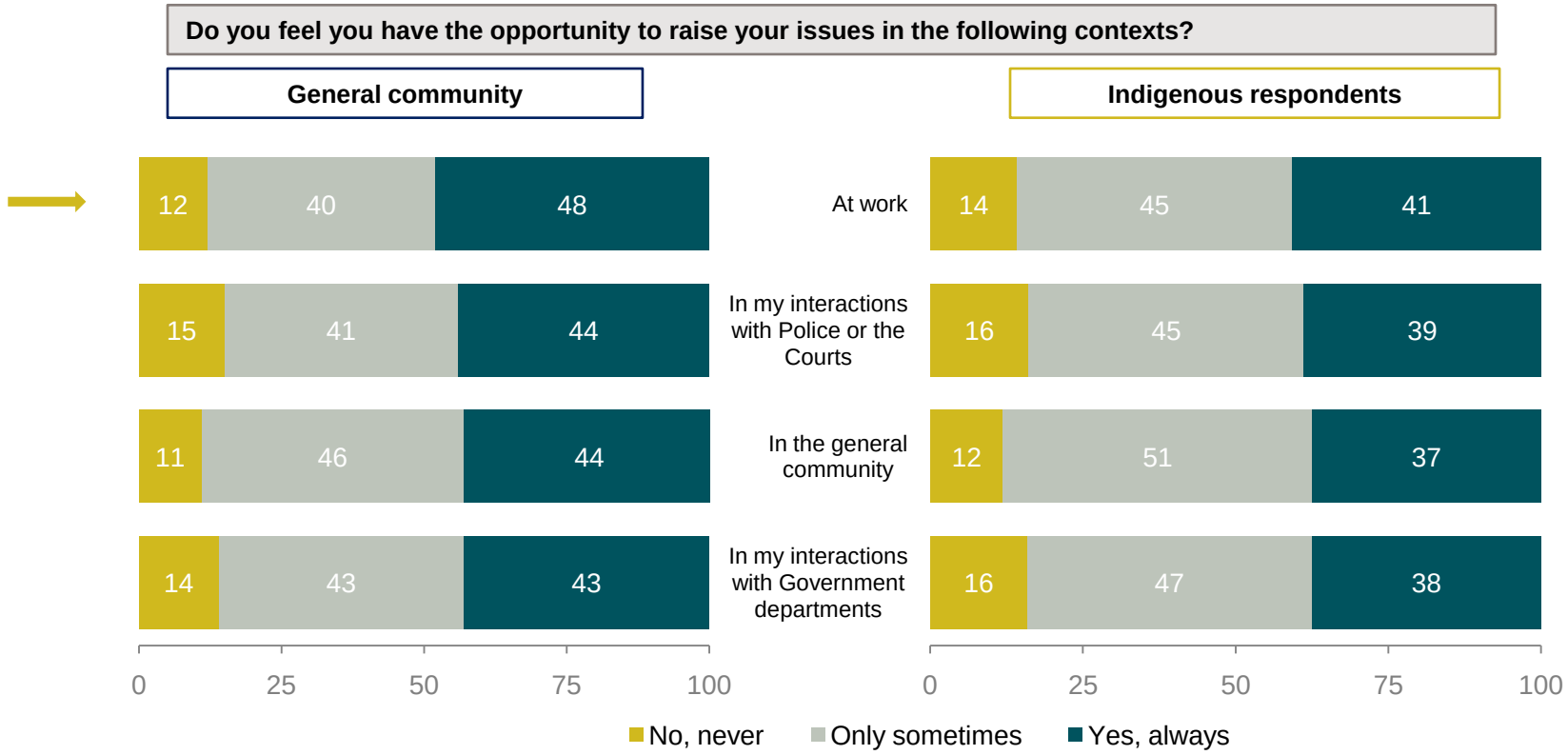

The general community are more likely to believe they have the opportunity to raise their issues in various contexts, than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In particular, Indigenous respondents more widely feel they never or only sometimes have this opportunity at work (59%) or in the general community (63%), than the general public (52% and 57% respectively).

Q. If you feel unhappy about something, do you feel you have the opportunity to raise your issues in the following contexts?

Historical Acceptance

How much do we accept the wrongs of the past?

We mostly accept key facts about past injustices

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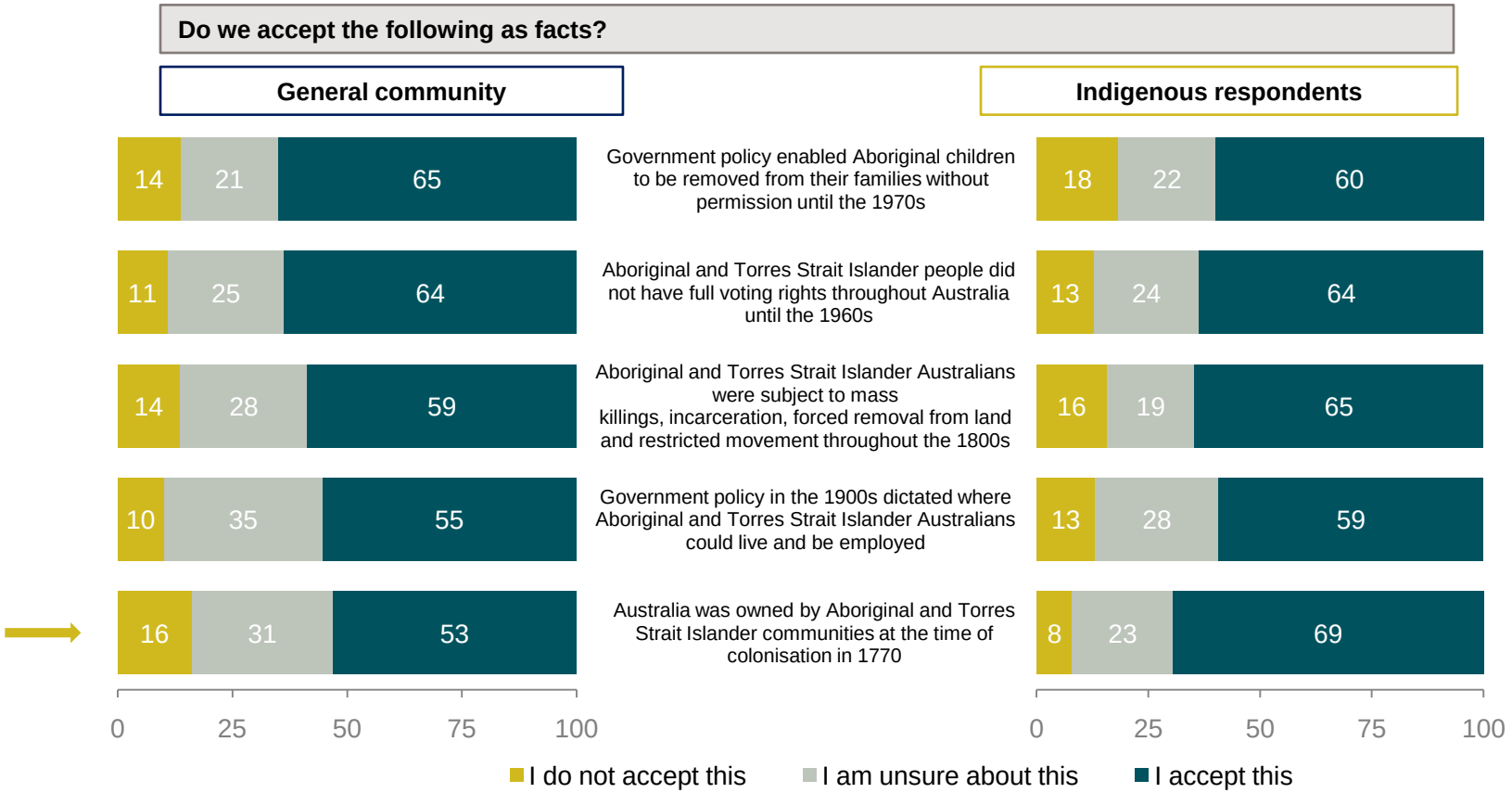

Both the general community and Indigenous people largely accept a number of key facts about Australia's past institutional prejudices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

However, there is greatest disagreement between the groups regarding the fact that Australia was owned by Indigenous communities at the time of British colonisation, with 69% of Indigenous respondents seeing this as factual, compared to 53% of the general public.

Q. Do you accept or not accept the following as facts about Australia's past?

We are divided on whether Indigenous people are responsible for their disadvantages today

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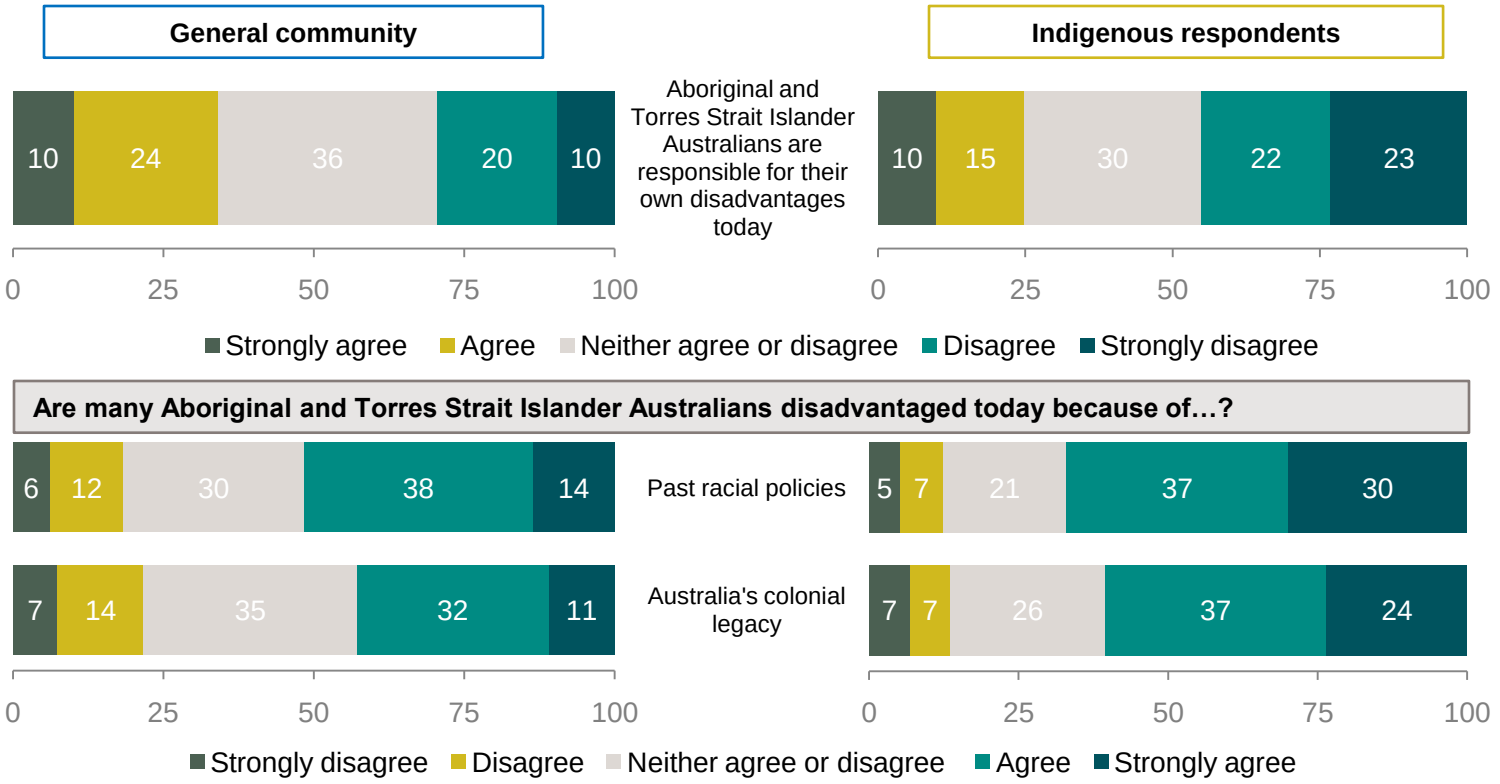

The general community (34%) are more likely to believe Indigenous people are responsible for their own disadvantages today, than Indigenous people (25%). However, both the general public and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people widely agree that many Indigenous people are disadvantaged today because of past racial policies.

The general public (43%) are less certain about colonial legacy as a cause of disadvantage, than Indigenous people (61%).

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

We widely agree that past policies have been a cause of many Indigenous disadvantages

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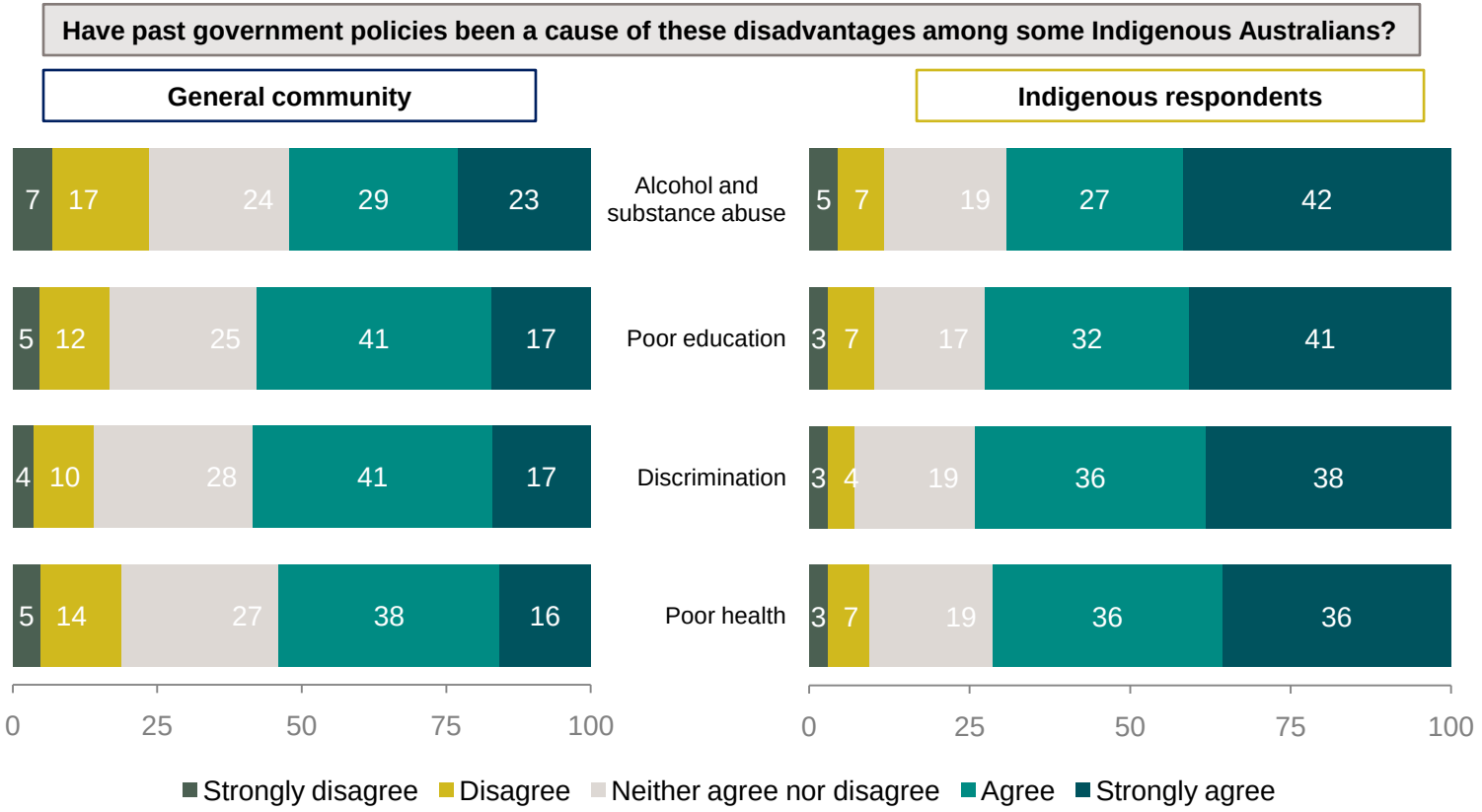

The general community are far less likely to agree strongly that past government policies are responsible for many forms of disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today, than Indigenous people. In particular, many more Indigenous respondents strongly agree past policies have been a cause of poor education (41%), and discrimination (38%), compared to just 17% respectively of the general public.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree that race-based policies of past governments are a cause of the following disadvantages suffered by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians?

We widely agree that past policies have been a cause of many Indigenous disadvantages (cont.)

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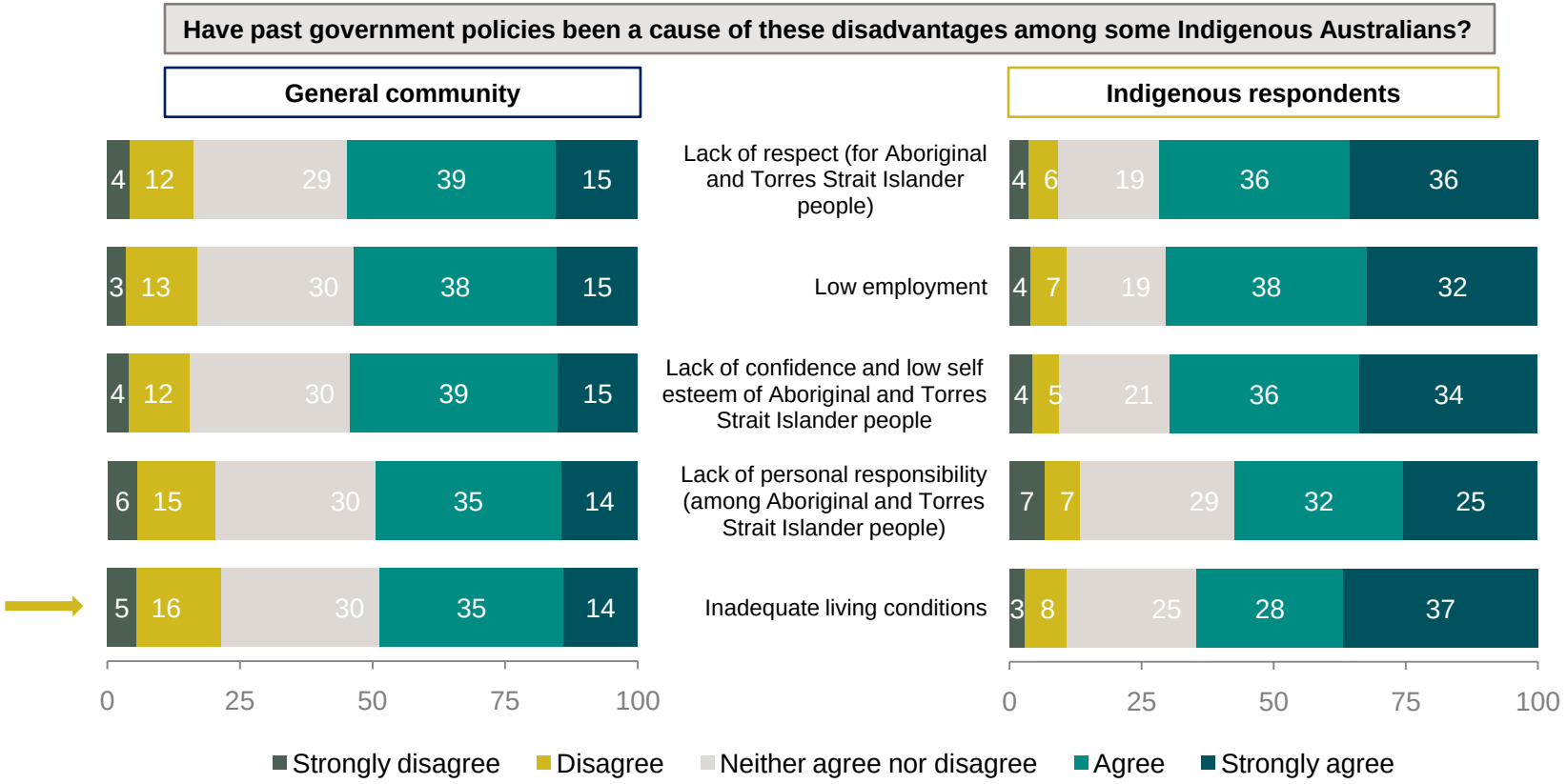

The general community are far less likely to agree strongly that past government policies are responsible for many forms of disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today, than Indigenous people. In particular, 36% of Indigenous respondents strongly agree past policies have been a cause of the lack of respect for their people, and inadequate living conditions (37%), compared to just 15% and 14% respectively of the general public.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree that race-based policies of past governments are a cause of the following disadvantages suffered by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians?

We widely agree it is important for all Australians to learn more about past issues

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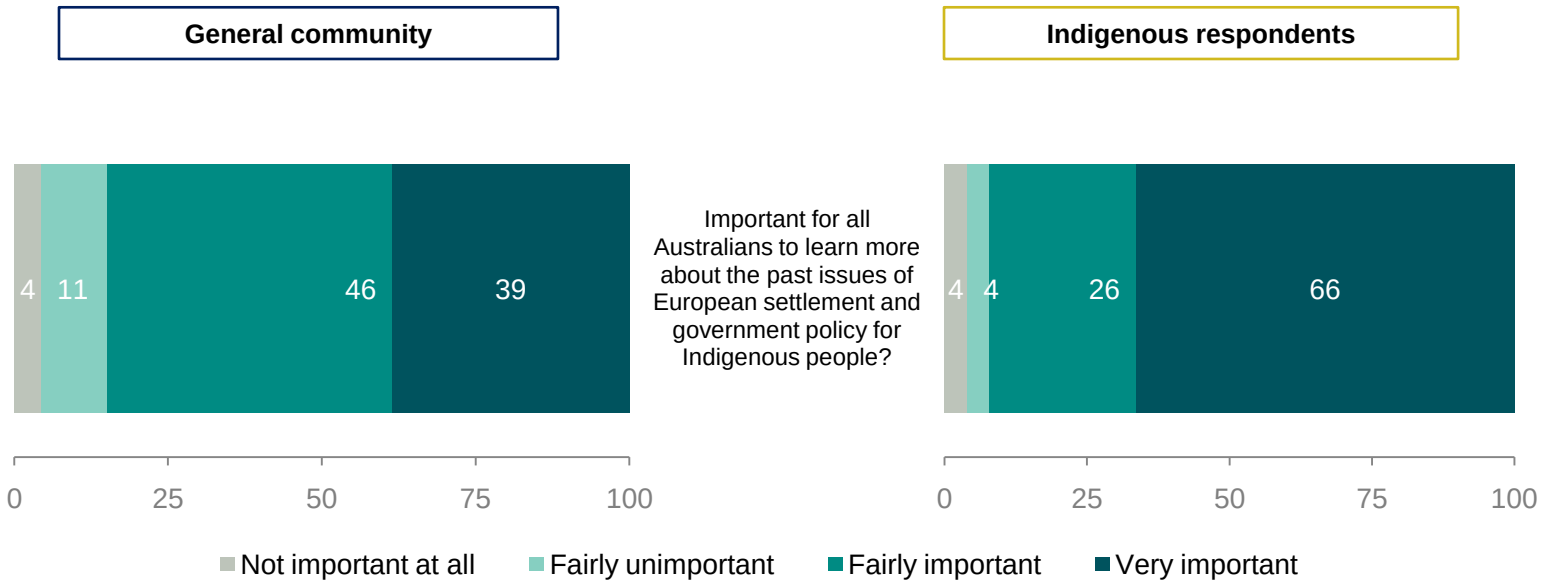

The general community are far less likely to agree strongly (39%) that it's important to learn about the past issues of European settlement and government policies experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, than Indigenous people (66%).

Q. Is it important or not important for all Australians to learn more about the past issues of European settlement and government policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Indigenous Australians are more divided on whether past issues can be forgiven or not

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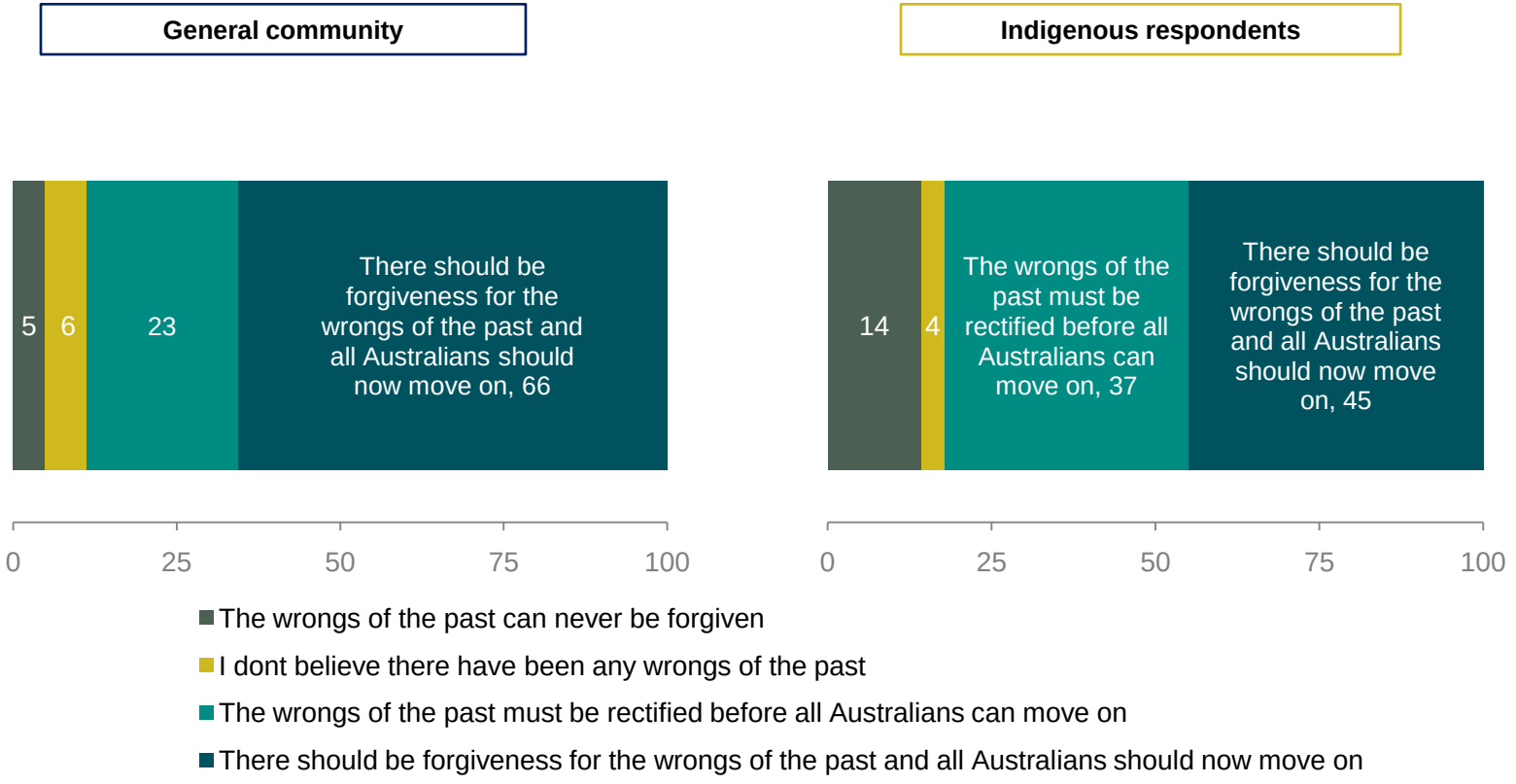
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to feel the wrongs of the past must be rectified before we can move on with reconciliation (37%) , compared with the general community (23%). Conversely, the general public more widely feel there should be forgiveness so we can now move on (66%), compared to Indigenous respondents (45%).



Q. In terms of the history of European settlement in Australia, which of the following statements do you most agree with?

Appendix

Respondent profiles

Sample characteristics:

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Gender and age	General community weighted %	General community (raw numbers)	Indigenous community weighted %	Indigenous community (raw numbers)
Male	49%	558	49%	209
Female	51%	542	51%	293
18 to 29 years old	21%	138	34%	132
30 to 39	18%	254	21%	132
40 to 49	18%	183	20%	100
50 to 59	17%	220	14%	76
60 to 69	13%	214	7%	58
70+	13%	91	4%	4

Education level	General community weighted %	General community (raw numbers)	Indigenous community weighted %	Indigenous community (raw numbers)
Part of secondary school	8%	91	13%	73
Secondary school	23%	239	27%	130
TAFE / Apprenticeship	28%	331	40%	198
University degree	29%	308	15%	76
Postgraduate university degree	12%	131	5%	25

General community total sample size = 1100. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander total sample size = 502
Please note, percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100%

Sample characteristics:

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Birth	General community weighted %	General community (raw numbers)	Indigenous community weighted %	Indigenous community (raw numbers)
Born in Australia	73%	558	99%	496
Not born in Australia	27%	542	1%	6
No n-Indigenous	98%	1084		
Australian Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander	2%	16	100%	502

Cultural background (non-Indigenous)	General community weighted %	General community (raw numbers)
British or Irish	50%	566
European	23%	248
Asian	12%	116
Middle Eastern	2%	18
African	1%	5
Pacific Islander	1%	5
Central or South American	1%	6
Other or mixed culture	12%	120

General community total sample size = 1100. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander total sample size = 502
Please note, percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100%

Sample characteristics:

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State	General community weighted %	General community (raw numbers)	Indigenous community weighted %	Indigenous community (raw numbers)
NSW	32%	365	32%	202
VIC	25%	275	7%	90
QLD	20%	208	28%	130
WA	10%	89	13%	23
SA	8%	118	6%	26
Other	5%	45	15%	31

Metro/Regional	General community weighted %	General community (raw numbers)	Indigenous community weighted %	Indigenous community (raw numbers)
Capital city	67%	724	44%	206
Major regional city	12%	131	19%	90
Regional town	8%	98	16%	93
Rural town	8%	91	13%	74
Remote town or community	5%	56	9%	39

General community total sample size = 1100. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander total sample size = 502
Please note, percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100%

Sample characteristics:

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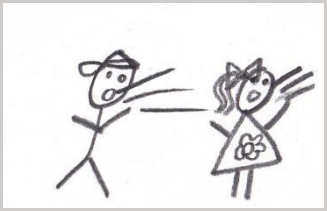
Household income (gross)	General community weighted %	General community (raw numbers)	Indigenous community weighted %	Indigenous community (raw numbers)
Less than $30,000	15%	162	24%	121
$30,000 - $49,999	18%	196	16%	108
$50,000 - $69,999	14%	154	11%	59
$70,000 - $89,999	10%	118	12%	62
$90,000 - $119,999	15%	163	11%	36
$120,000 - $149,999	6%	70	4%	18
$150,000 - $249,999	9%	96	5%	28
$250,000 or more	1%	11	0%	1
Don’t know/prefer not to say	13%	130	17%	69

General community total sample size = 1100. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander total sample size = 502
Please note, percentages have been rounded and may not equal 100%



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