

# Cross Jurisdictional Information Access Study

ALL JURISDICTIONS

August 2021



# RESEARCH DESIGN

**Five jurisdictions from across Australia including New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, commissioned Woolcott Research and Engagement to investigate awareness and experience of information access rights amongst the general public.**

A mixed mode survey amongst n=1785 Australian residents aged 18+ years was conducted between 26<sup>th</sup> June and 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021 utilising an online panel and Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). A breakdown of respondents by state/territory is displayed below:

NSW	ACT	VIC	QLD	WA
n=350	n=350	n=368	n=363	n=354

Quotas were set by state, gender, age and location (metro/regional when applicable), and data was post-weighted to reflect the latest ABS population estimates.

Due to rounding, percentages may not always add to 100.

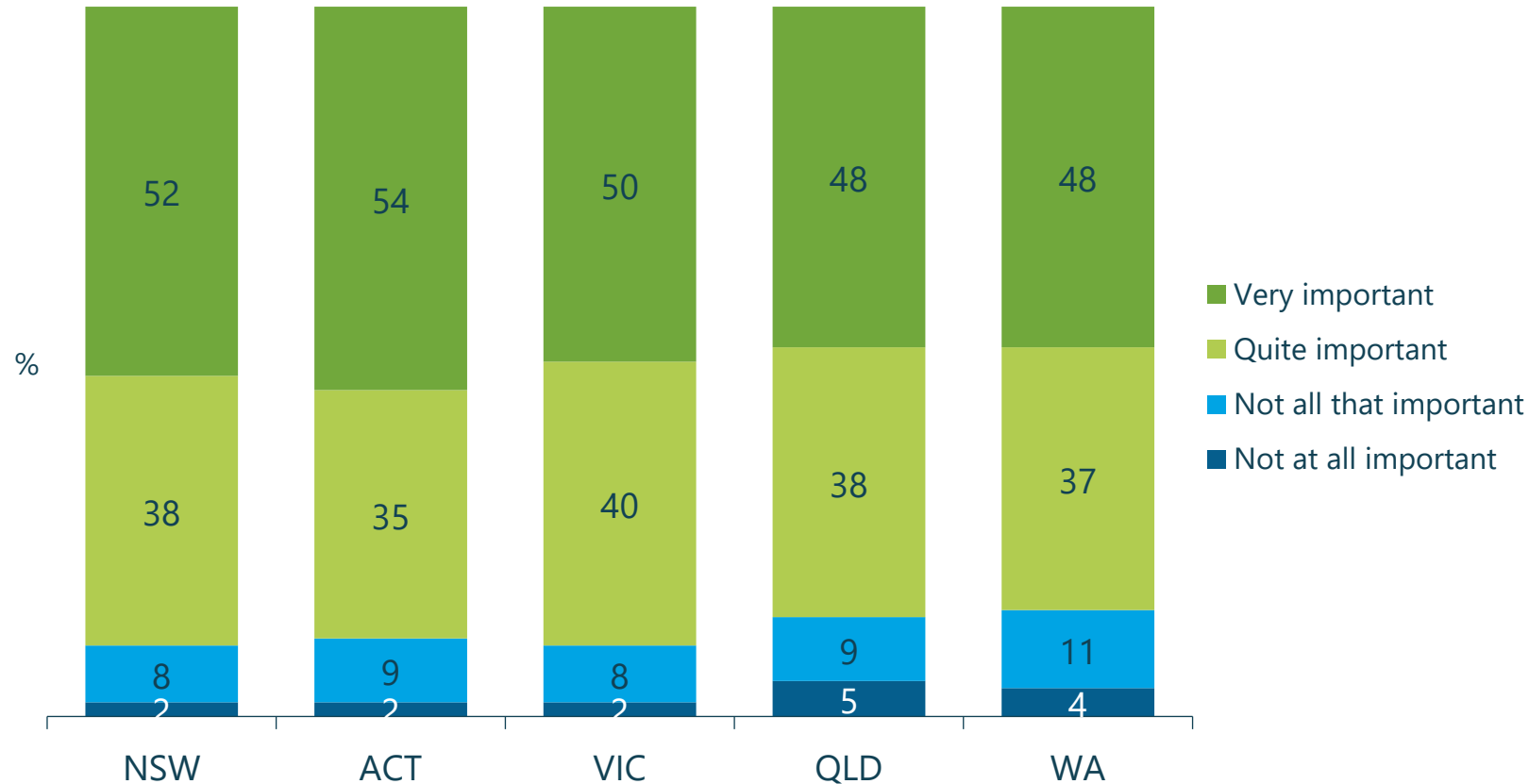


# INFORMATION ACCESS





# IMPORTANCE OF HAVING THE RIGHT TO ACCESS GOVERNMENT INFORMATION



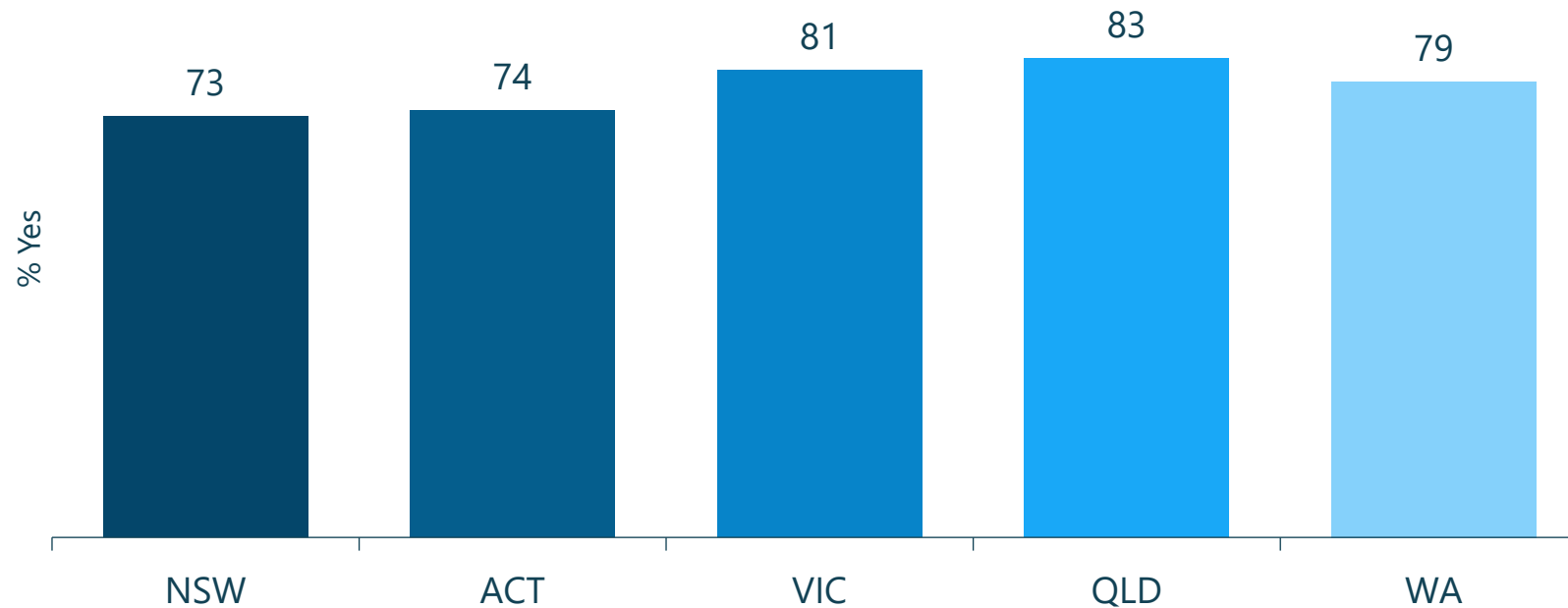
- Respondents consistently felt that the right to access government information was very or quite important

Q3. How important is it to you that you have a right to access information held by the (State) government? *This applies to all publicly available information, not just your own personal data.*

Base: All respondents (NSW n=350, ACT n=350, VIC n=368, QLD n=363, WA n=354)



# TOTAL AWARENESS OF RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION



- Most respondents across the jurisdictions were aware of their right to access information from at least one of the agencies listed

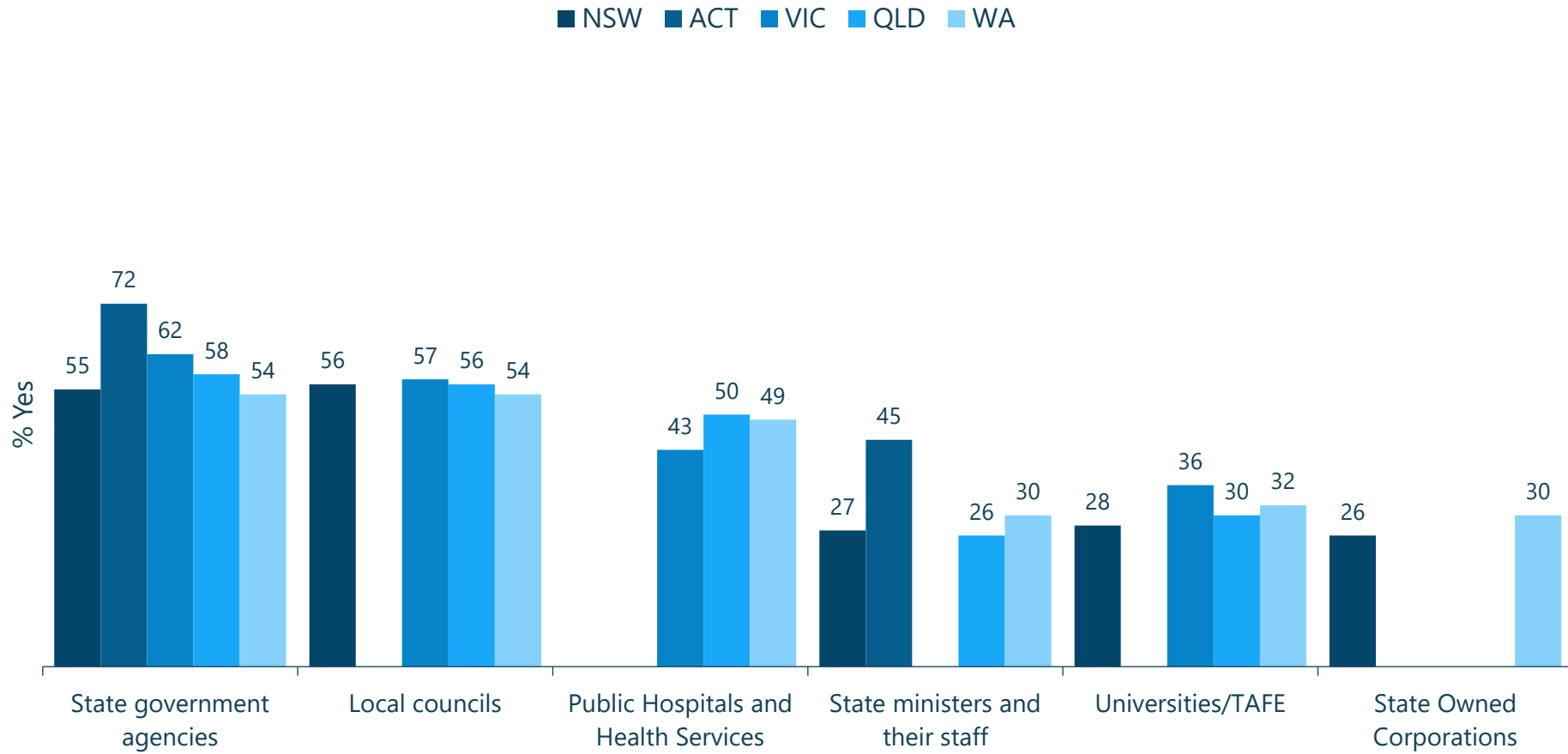
Q4. Did you know, under the [Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)/Freedom of Information Act 2016 (ACT)/ Freedom of Information Act 1982 (VIC)/ Queensland's Right to Information and Information Privacy Law/ Western Australia's freedom of information law], that you have a right to access information held by the following agencies?

Base: All respondents (NSW n=350, ACT n=350, VIC n=368, QLD n=363, WA n=354)



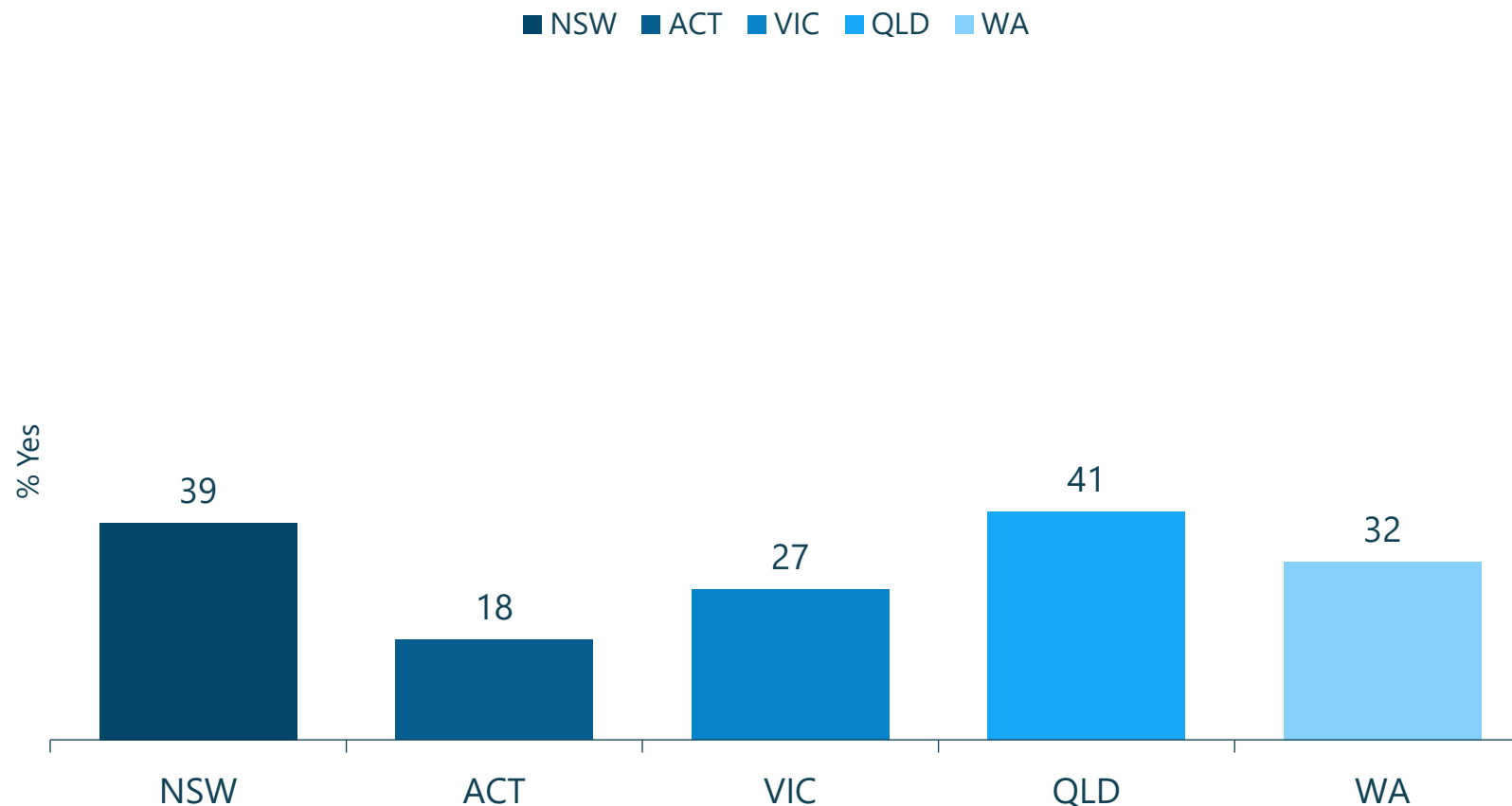
- The majority were aware of their right to access information from state government agencies and local councils (where applicable)
- Awareness of the right to access information held by Universities and state owned corporations tended to be lower

# AWARENESS OF RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION



Q4. Did you know, under the *Freedom of Information Act (Year and state)*, that you have a right to access information held by the following agencies?  
Base: All respondents (NSW n=350, ACT n=350, VIC n=368, QLD n=363, WA n=354)

# TOTAL ATTEMPTS TO ACCESS INFORMATION



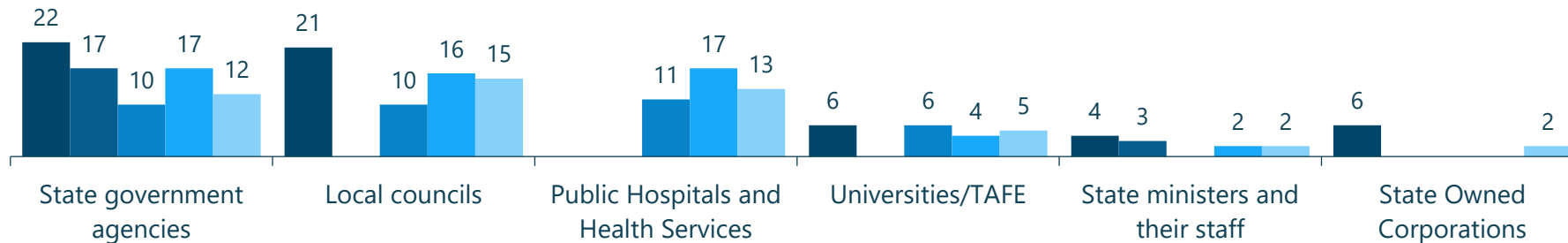
- The proportion of respondents who had attempted to access information from at least one agency varied somewhat across states/ territories



# ATTEMPTS TO ACCESS INFORMATION FROM SPECIFIC AGENCY

■ NSW ■ ACT ■ VIC ■ QLD ■ WA

% Yes



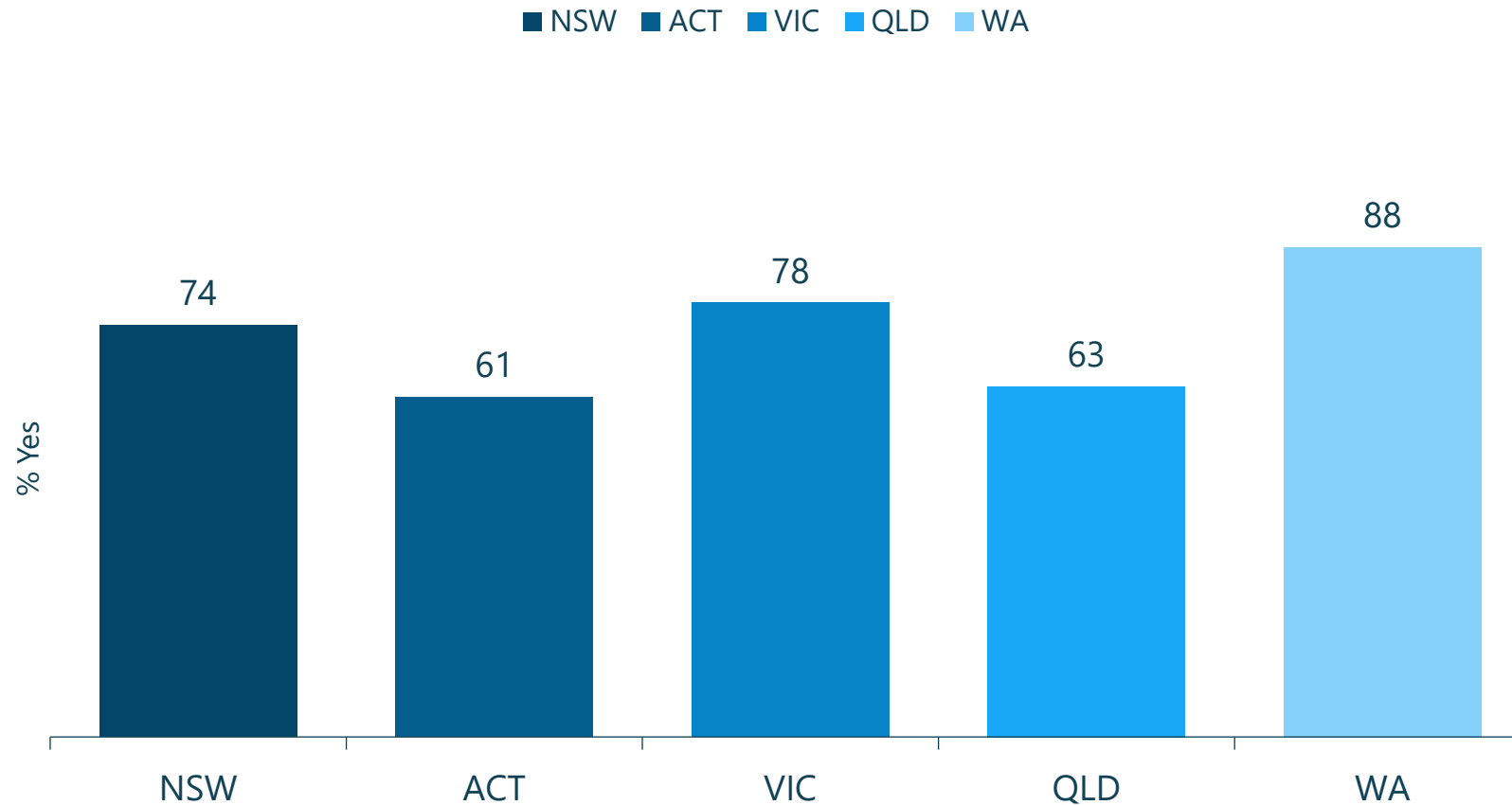
- State government agencies and local councils tended to be the most common entities for attempts to access information

Q5. In the last 3 years have you tried to access information held by?  
Base: All respondents (NSW n=350, ACT n=350, VIC n=368, QLD n=363, WA n=354)





# TOTAL SUCCESS IN ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS INFORMATION

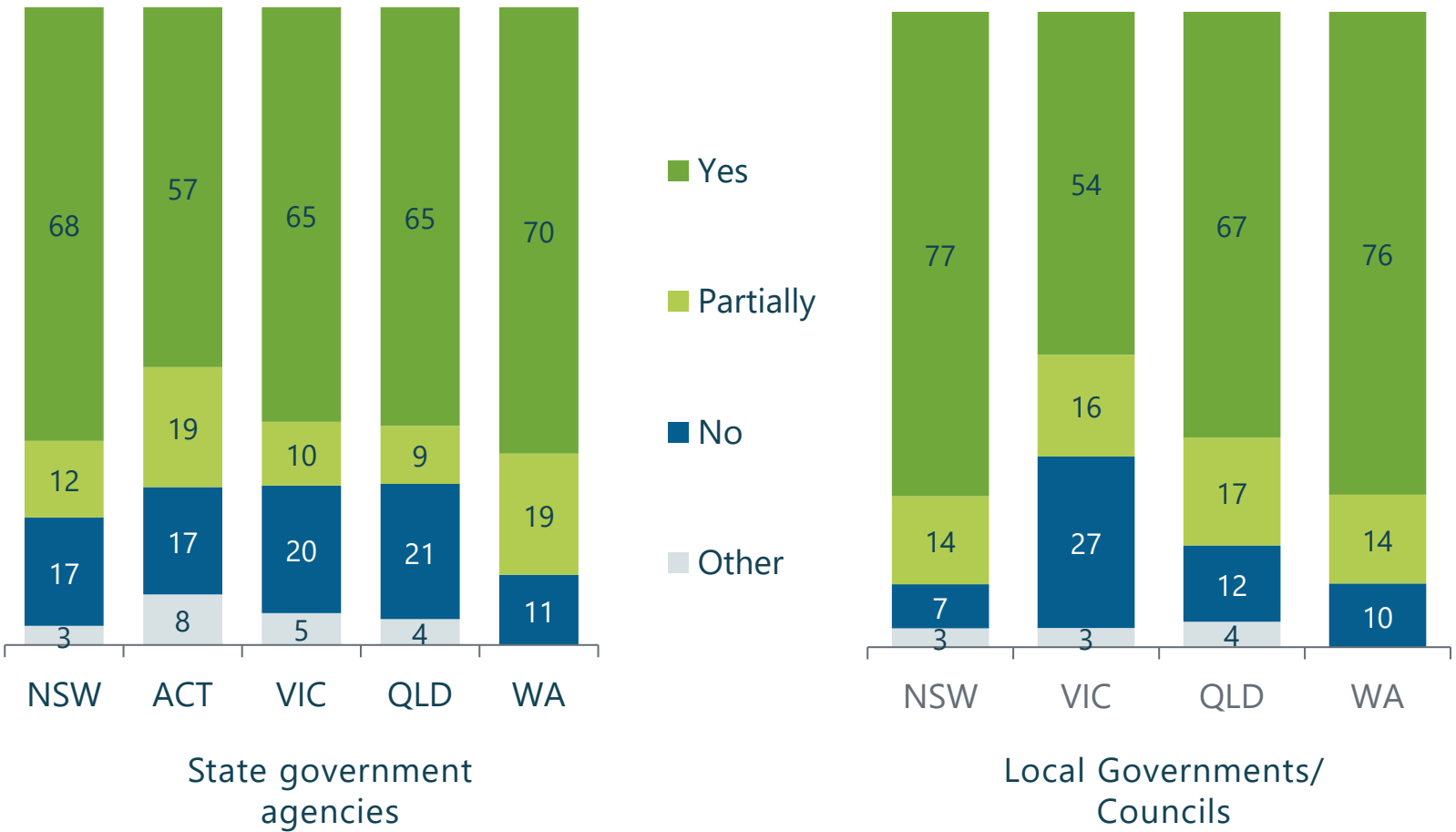


- Success in accessing at least some of the information requested varied across states, however this is likely impacted by the different types of agencies across jurisdictions



- Success in accessing information from state government entities and local councils somewhat varied across jurisdictions, however most were able to at least partially access the requested information

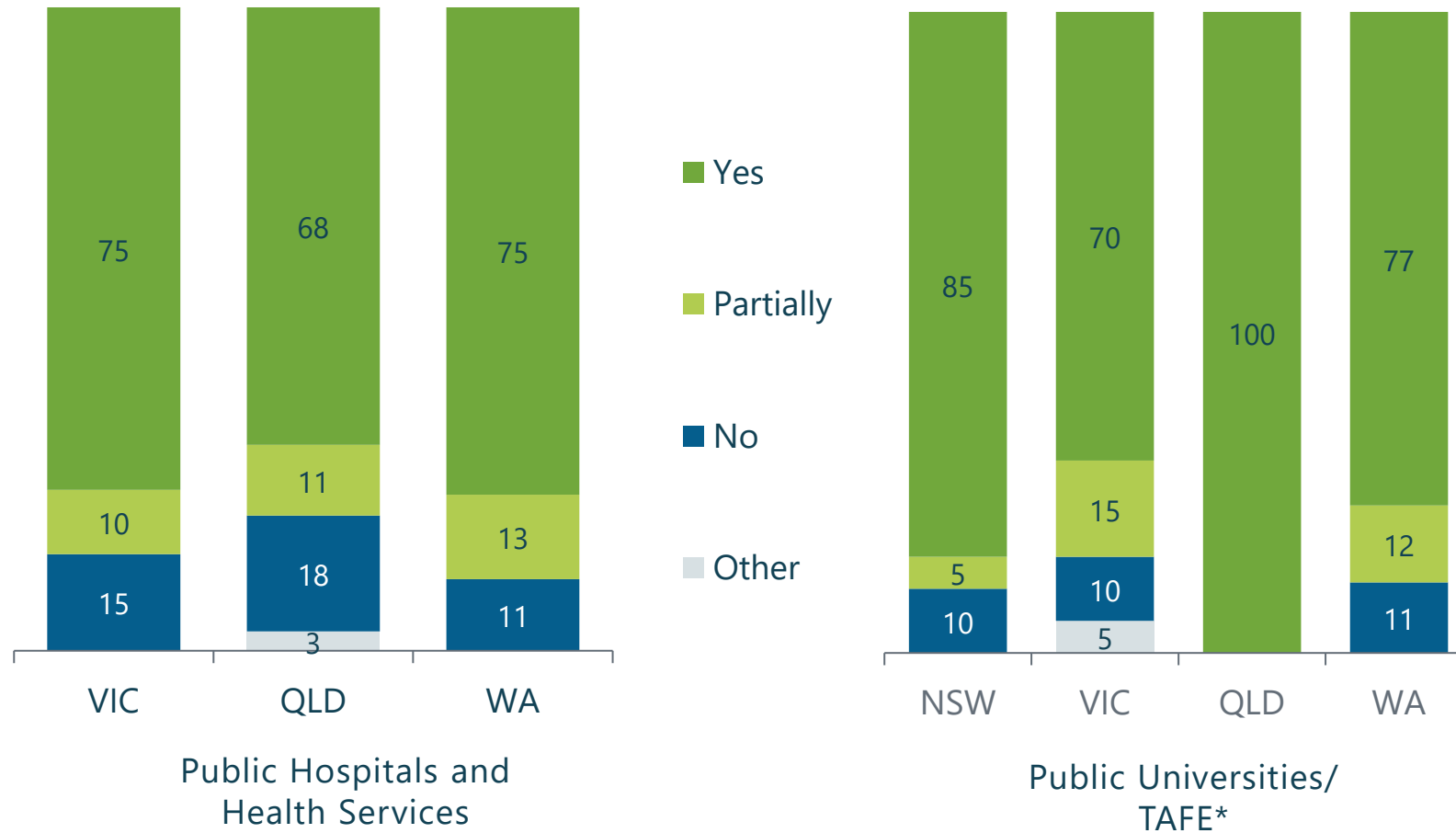
# SUCCESS IN ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS INFORMATION BY AGENCY



Q6. Were you successful in accessing information from ...?  
Base: Respondents who tried to access information from State government agencies (NSW n=76, ACT n=56, VIC n=36, QLD n=59, WA n=44)  
Base: Respondents who tried to access information from Local councils (NSW n=73, VIC n=37, QLD n=59, WA n=51)



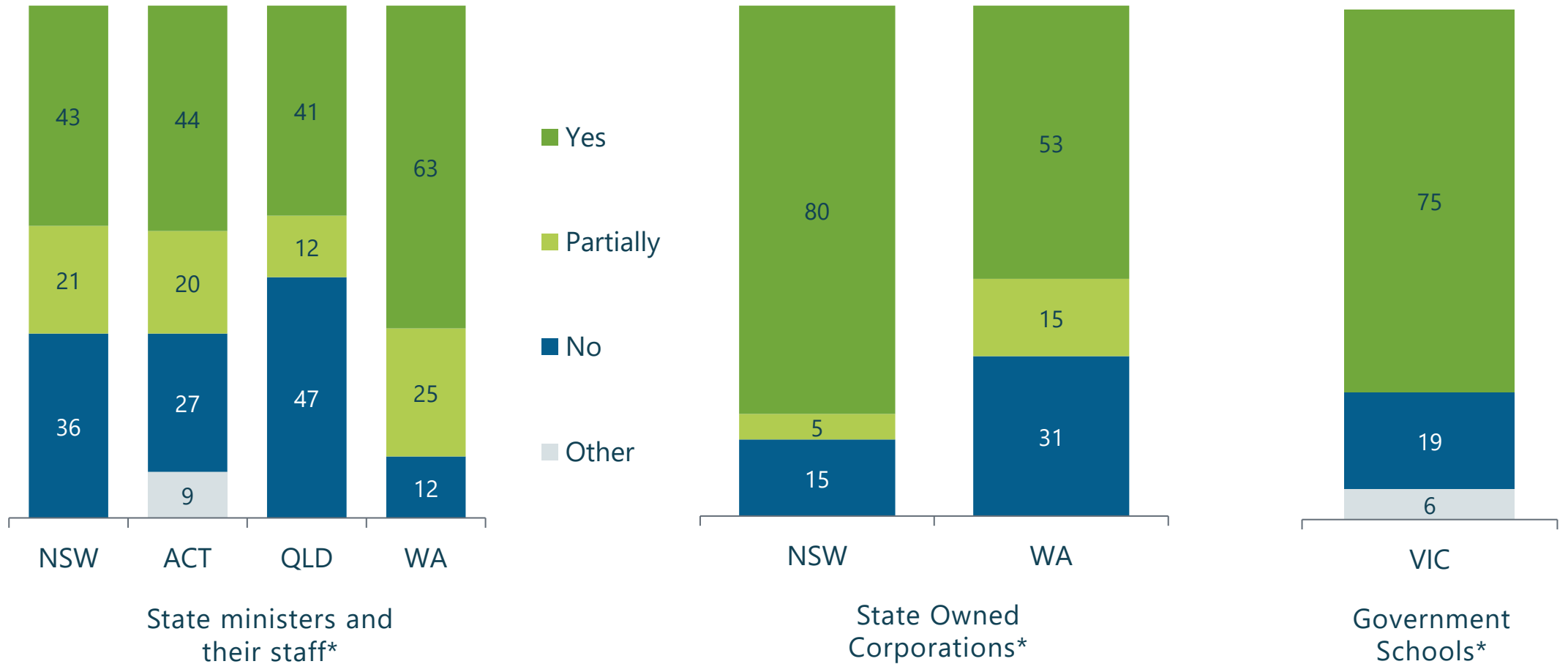
# SUCCESS IN ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS INFORMATION BY AGENCY



- Similarly, most were able to access the information they requested from public health services and Universities/TAFEs

Q6. Were you successful in accessing information from ...?  
Base: Respondents who tried to access information from Public hospitals and health services (VIC n=40, QLD n=57, WA n=44)  
Base: Respondents who tried to access information from Public Universities/TAFE (NSW n=20\*, VIC n=20\*, QLD n=13\*, WA n=16\*)  
\*Caution: Small base size

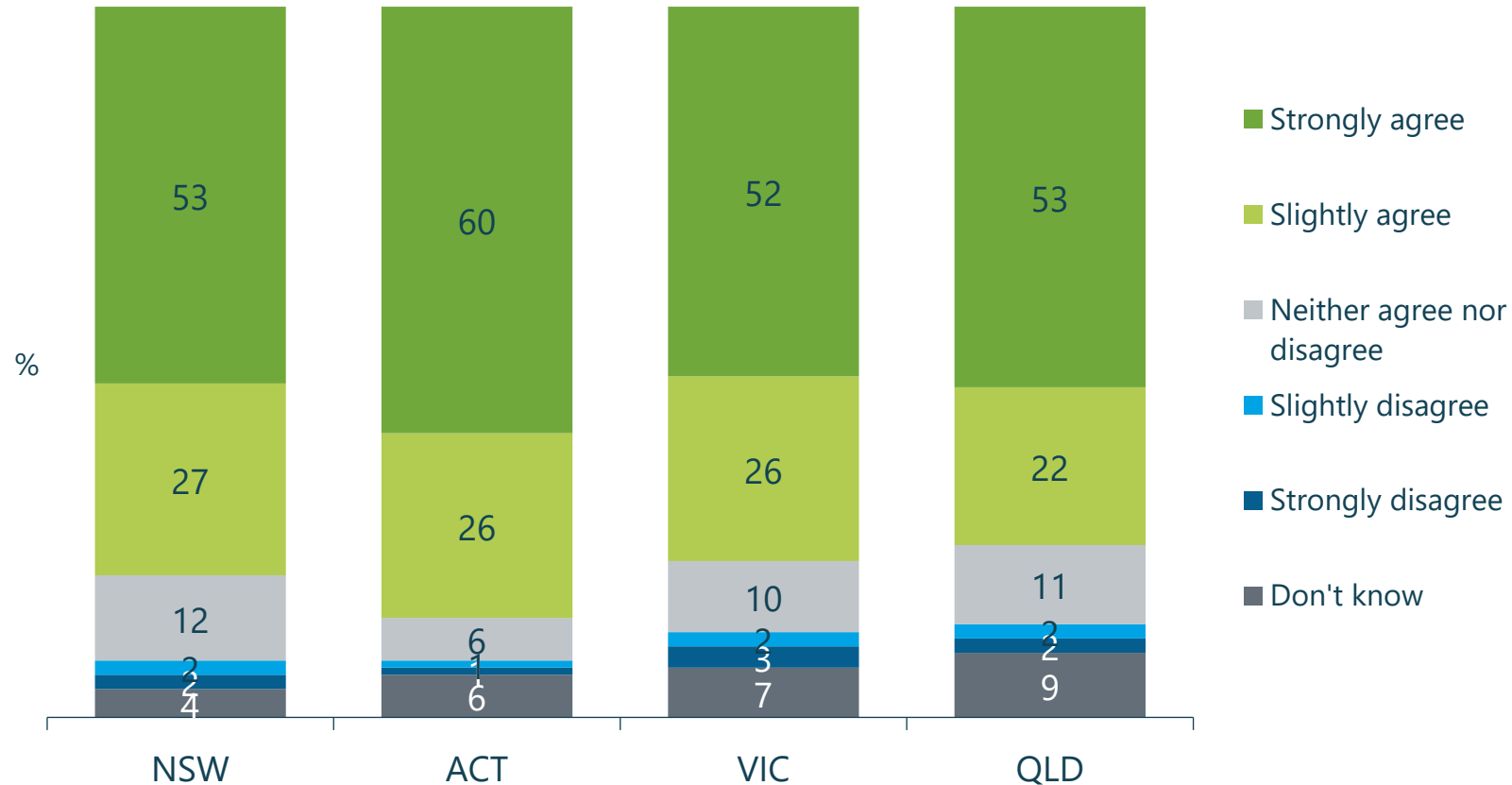
# SUCCESS IN ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS INFORMATION BY AGENCY



Q6. Were you successful in accessing information from ...?  
 Base: Respondents who tried to access information from State Ministers and their staff (NSW n=14\*, ACT n=11\*, QLD n=9\*, WA n=8\*)  
 Base: Respondents who tried to access information from State Owned Corporations (NSW n=20\*, WA n=6\*)  
 Base: Respondents who tried to access information from Government schools (VIC n=16\*)  
 \*Caution: Small base size



# AGREEMENT THAT AGENCIES SHOULD PUBLICLY REPORT ON THE USE OF AI



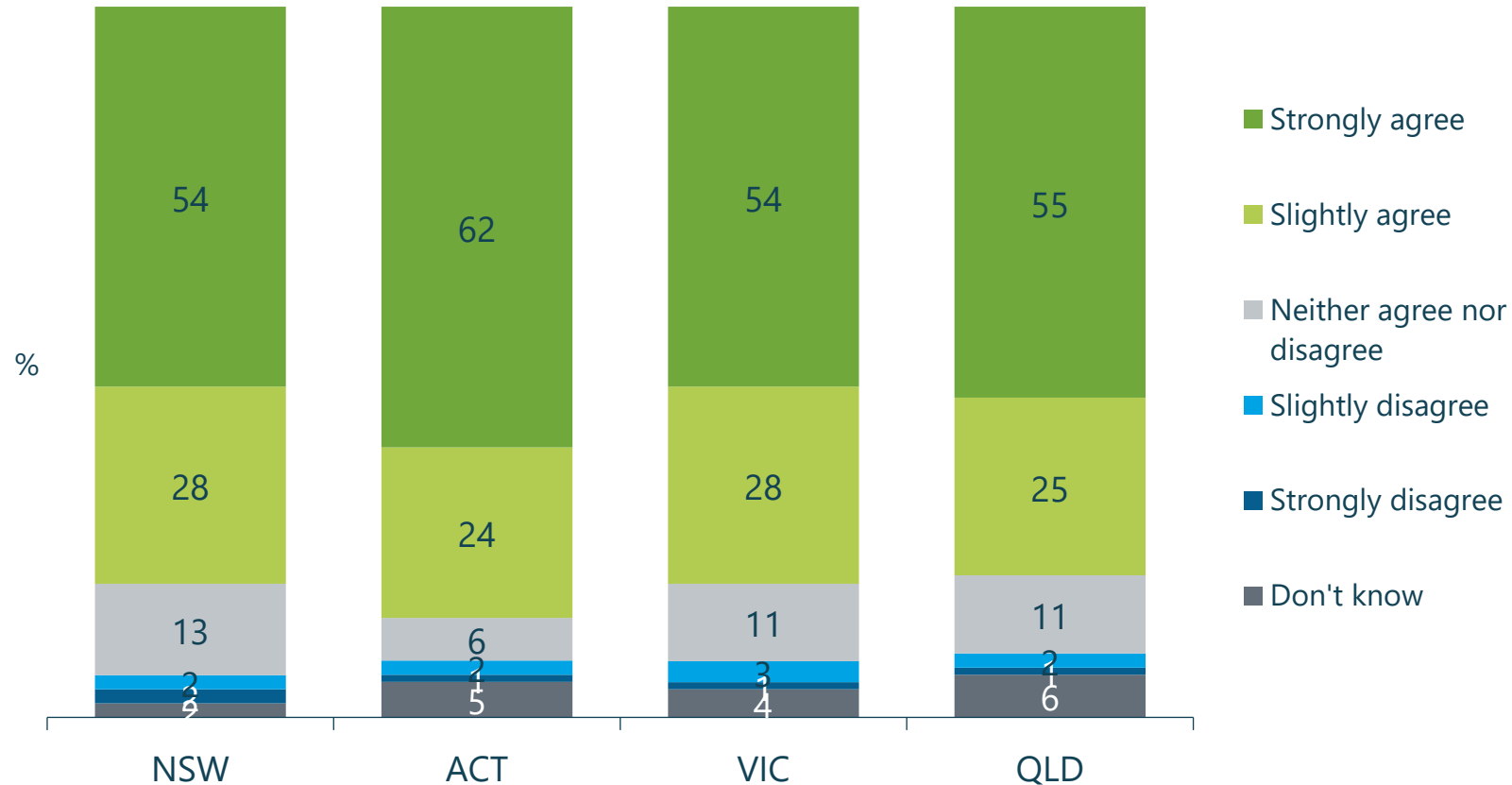
- The majority of respondents from all states/territories agreed that agencies should be required to publicly report on artificial intelligence that was used inform decisions

Q9. Governments are increasingly using data, algorithms and other forms of artificial intelligence to inform decisions, for example subsidy and or payment calculations. To what extent do you agree that government agencies should be required to publicly report on any systems used to inform agency decisions that impact individuals?

Base: All respondents (NSW n=350, ACT n=350, VIC n=368, QLD n=363) THIS QUESTION WAS NOT ASKED IN WA



# AGREEMENT THAT AGENCIES SHOULD PUBLICLY REPORT ON MAINTAINED INFORMATION



- Respondents from across the jurisdictions also agreed that agencies should publicly report on the information they maintain

Q10. To what extent do you agree that government agencies should publicly report on the information they maintain?  
Base: All respondents (NSW n=350, ACT n=350, VIC n=368, QLD n=363) THIS QUESTION WAS NOT ASKED IN WA



# DEMOGRAPHICS



# GENDER AND AGE



	NSW % (n=350)	ACT % (n=350)	VIC % (n=368)	QLD % (n=363)	WA % (n=354)
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	50	55	50	52	53
Male	50	45	50	48	47
Gender neutral	-	-	-	<1	-
Not specified	<1	<1	-	<1	<1
<b>Age</b>					
18-24	7	4	4	8	8
25-34	21	20	24	20	20
35-44	17	16	24	20	19
45-54	17	16	11	15	17
55-64	15	7	10	8	5
65-74	14	15	12	11	12
75+	8	22	16	17	18

Q1. Which of the following age brackets do you belong to?

Q2. Do you identify as being...?

Base: All respondents (NSW n=350, ACT n=350, VIC n=368, QLD n=363, WA n=354)





# WORKING STATUS AND MAIN LANGUAGE SPOKEN

	NSW % (n=350)	ACT % (n=350)	VIC % (n=368)	QLD % (n=363)	WA % (n=354)
<b>Working status</b>					
Working full time	41	41	46	38	41
Retired	23	38	28	28	32
Working part time	18	13	15	14	14
Engaged in home duties	8	3	3	8	4
Student	7	3	3	5	6
Unemployed	3	2	4	7	4
Not specified	1	<1	1	<1	<1
<b>Main language spoken</b>					
English	95	91	91	95	94
Other	5	9	9	5	6

Q11. Which of these categories best describes you?

Q12. What is the main language spoken at home?

Base: All respondents (NSW n=350, ACT n=350, VIC n=368, QLD n=363, WA n=354)

# SUMMARY

The vast majority of respondents across jurisdictions felt that their right to access information from government sources was very or quite important.

Most were aware of their right to access information from at least one of the agencies listed.

The proportion of respondents who had attempted to access information from a state entity varied somewhat across the states/territories. Rates of successfully accessing data also appeared to differ across the jurisdictions.

State government agencies and local councils were the most common entities to request information access from, and most respondents were at least partially successful at doing so.

Respondents appeared to be the least successful at accessing information from state ministers and their staff.

There were high levels of agreement across jurisdictions that state agencies should publicly report on their use of AI and the information they maintain.



Woolcott Research & Engagement  
L6, 104 Mount Street, North Sydney 2060



+61 29261 5221



woolcott.com.au

Karyn Wong  
kwong@woolcott.com.au

Liz Sparham  
lsparham@woolcott.com.au

