

IPC Community Attitudes Study

Privacy

March 2024



information
and privacy
commission
new south wales





RESEARCH DESIGN

Woolcott Research was commissioned by the IPC to investigate awareness of privacy, information access and data sharing rights amongst the general public of NSW.

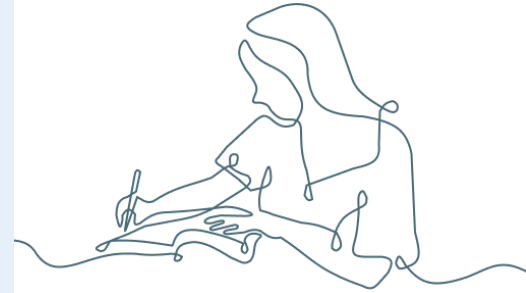
A phone and online survey amongst n=809 NSW residents aged 18+ years was conducted in February 2024.

Quotas were set by location (Sydney/ Regional NSW), gender and age; data was post-weighted by location, gender and age to reflect the latest ABS population estimates.

Where possible, this report compares results from the 2014 and 2016 omnibus studies, as well as the 2018, 2020 and 2022 mixed mode survey.

Significant differences in results at the 95% confidence level are shown as follows:

- Results from 2024 that are significantly higher or lower than the total are shown in **GREEN** or **RED** respectively
- Differences between reporting periods and their most recent comparative year (e.g. comparing 2024 data to 2022 data) are denoted by asterisks (*)





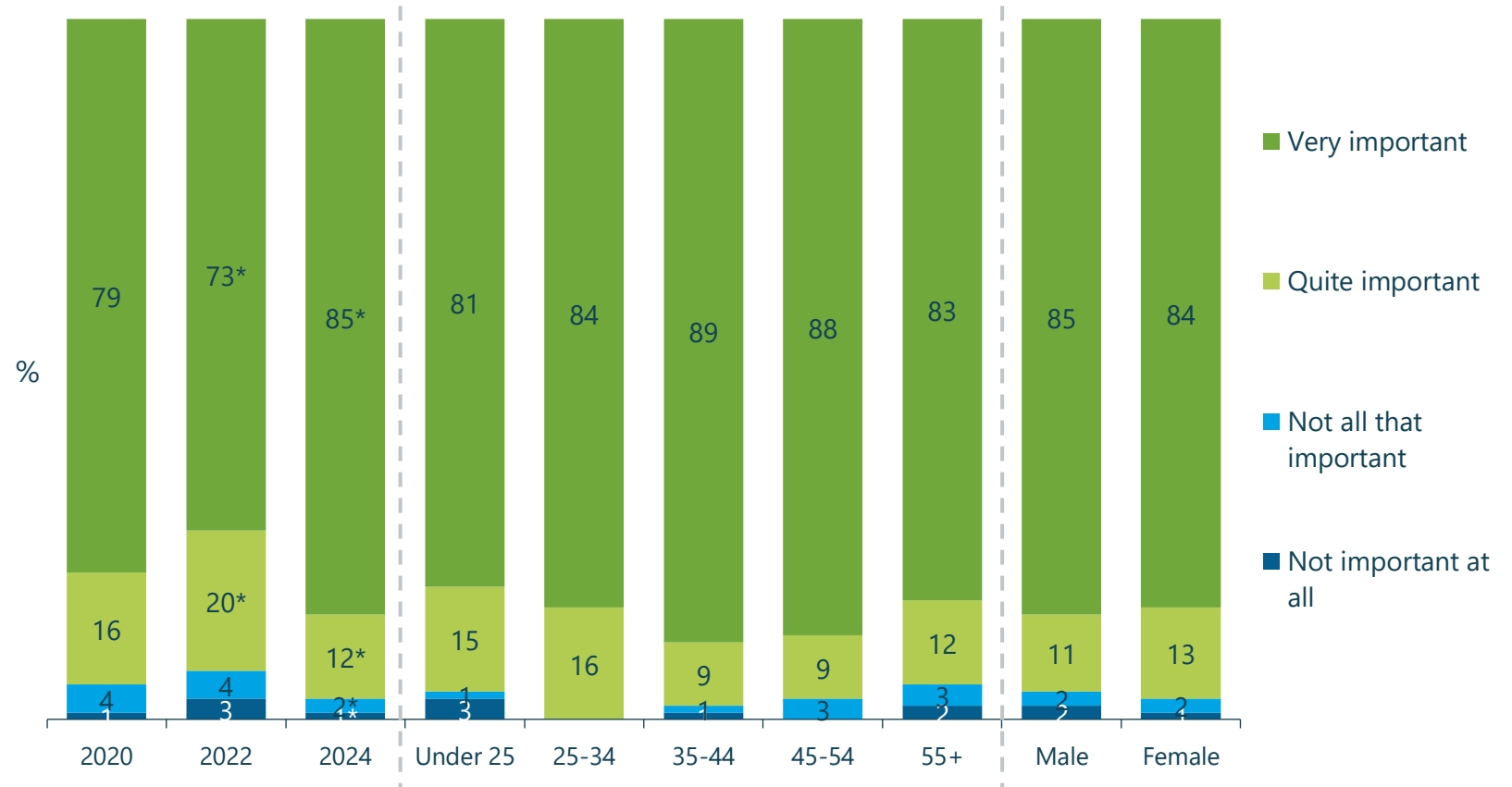
PRIVACY





IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Over 95% of respondents in 2024 felt that it was quite important or very important for their personal information to be protected. This was consistent across age groups and gender.
- The proportion of respondents who indicated that it was very important increased significantly from the 2022 reporting period.

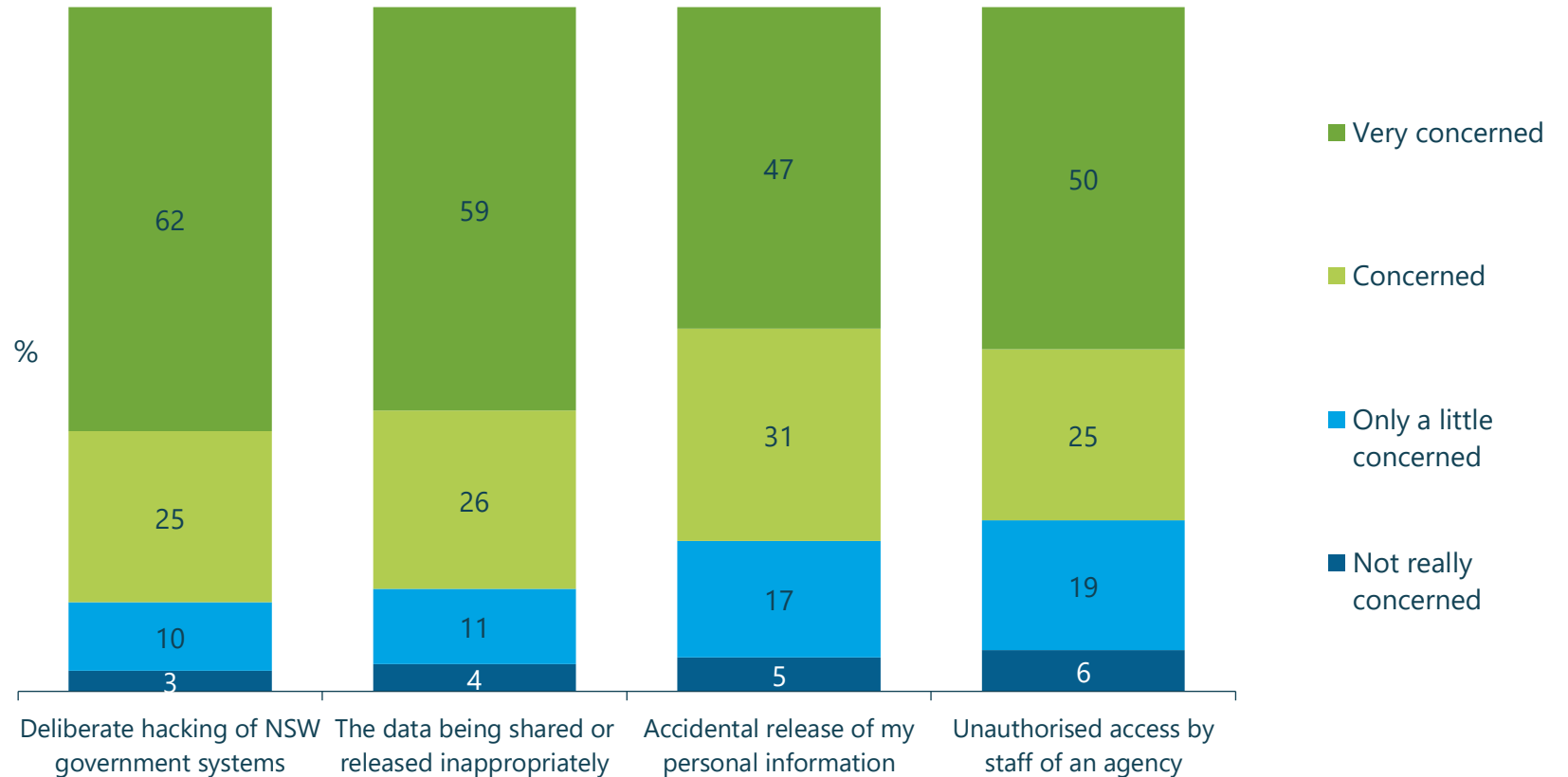


Q1. How important is it to you that NSW government agencies protect your personal or health information?
Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)
Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%



CONCERN ABOUT BREACHES OR MISUSE

- Over 75% of respondents showed high levels of concern for at least one aspect of data breach and misuse.



Q2. Thinking about the data NSW government agencies might currently hold, such as, transport or health services information, how concerned are you about the following...

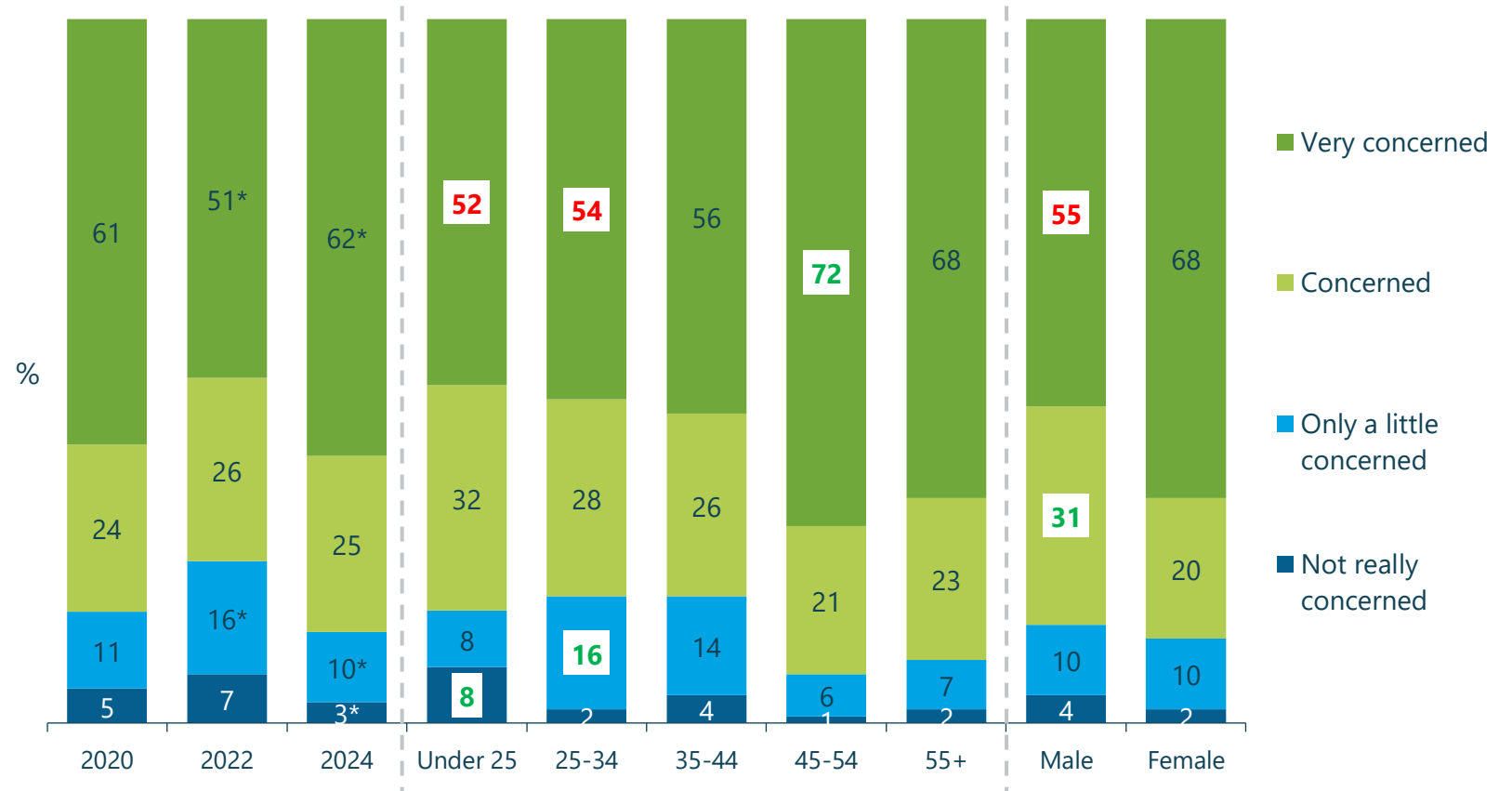
Base: All respondents (2024 n=809)

Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%



CONCERN ABOUT DELIBERATE HACKING OF NSW GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS

- The proportion of respondents who were concerned about the deliberate hacking of NSW Government systems increased this reporting period.
- Respondents under 44 displayed less concern than those over 44.



Q2. Thinking about the data NSW government agencies might currently hold, such as, transport or health services information, how concerned are you about the following...

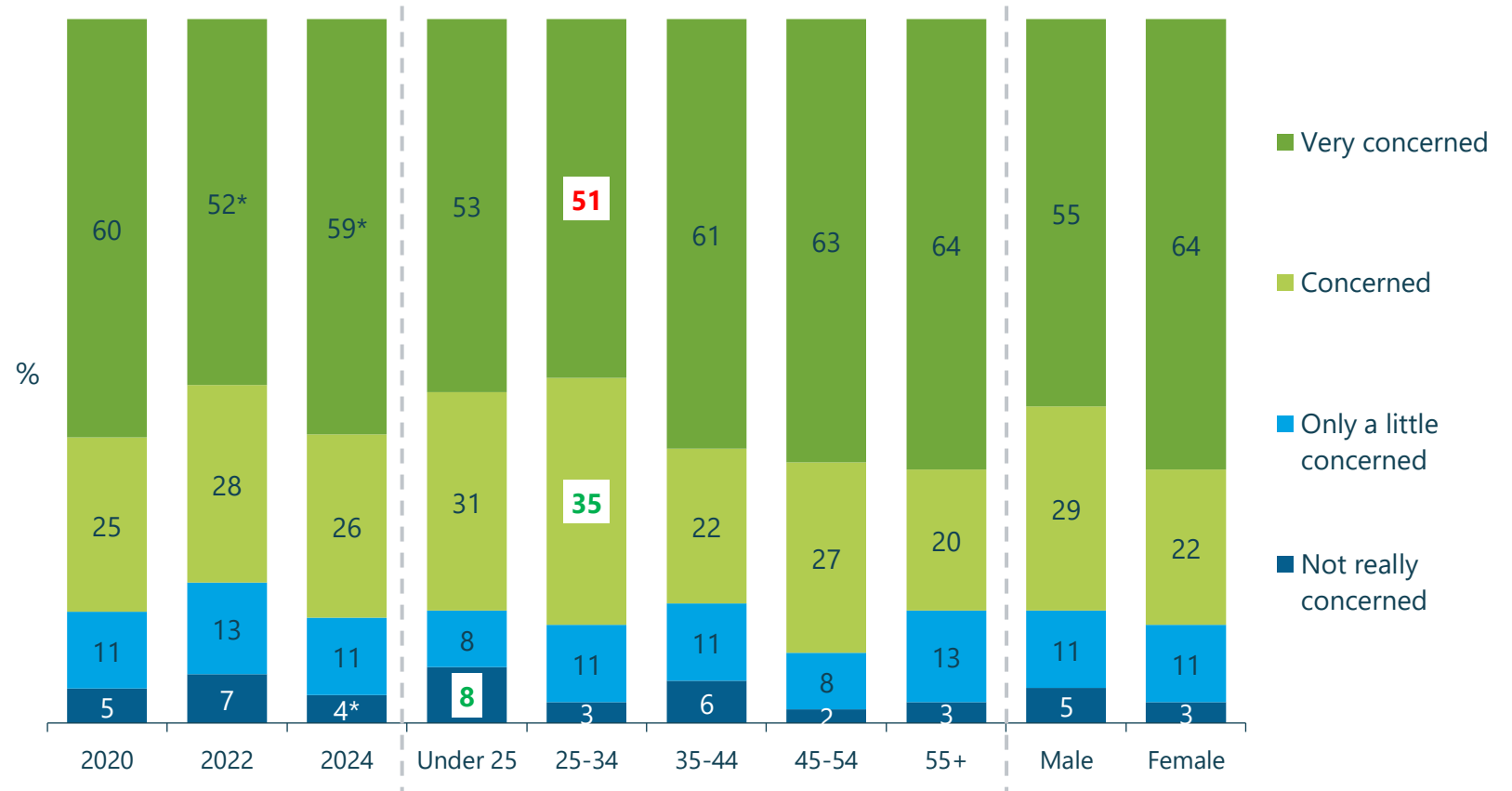
Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)

Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%



CONCERN ABOUT DATA BEING SHARED OR RELEASED INAPPROPRIATELY

- Concern over data being shared or released inappropriately increased this reporting period, particularly amongst females.



Q2. Thinking about the data NSW government agencies might currently hold, such as, transport or health services information, how concerned are you about the following...

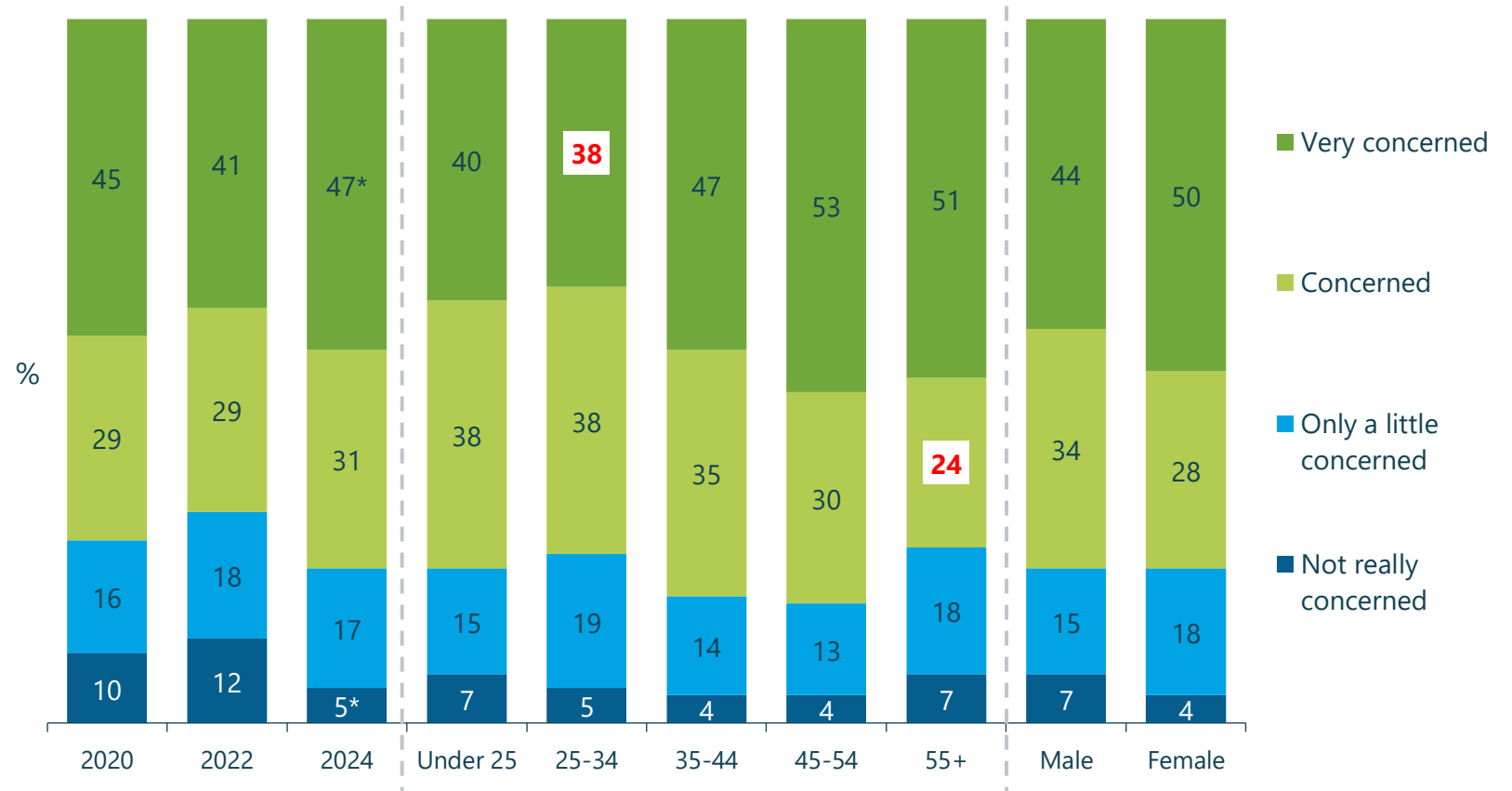
Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)

Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%



CONCERN ABOUT ACCIDENTAL RELEASE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Similarly, concern about the accidental release of information increased in 2024.
- Those aged between 35 and 54 were most likely to show concern in this area.



Q2. Thinking about the data NSW government agencies might currently hold, such as, transport or health services information, how concerned are you about the following...

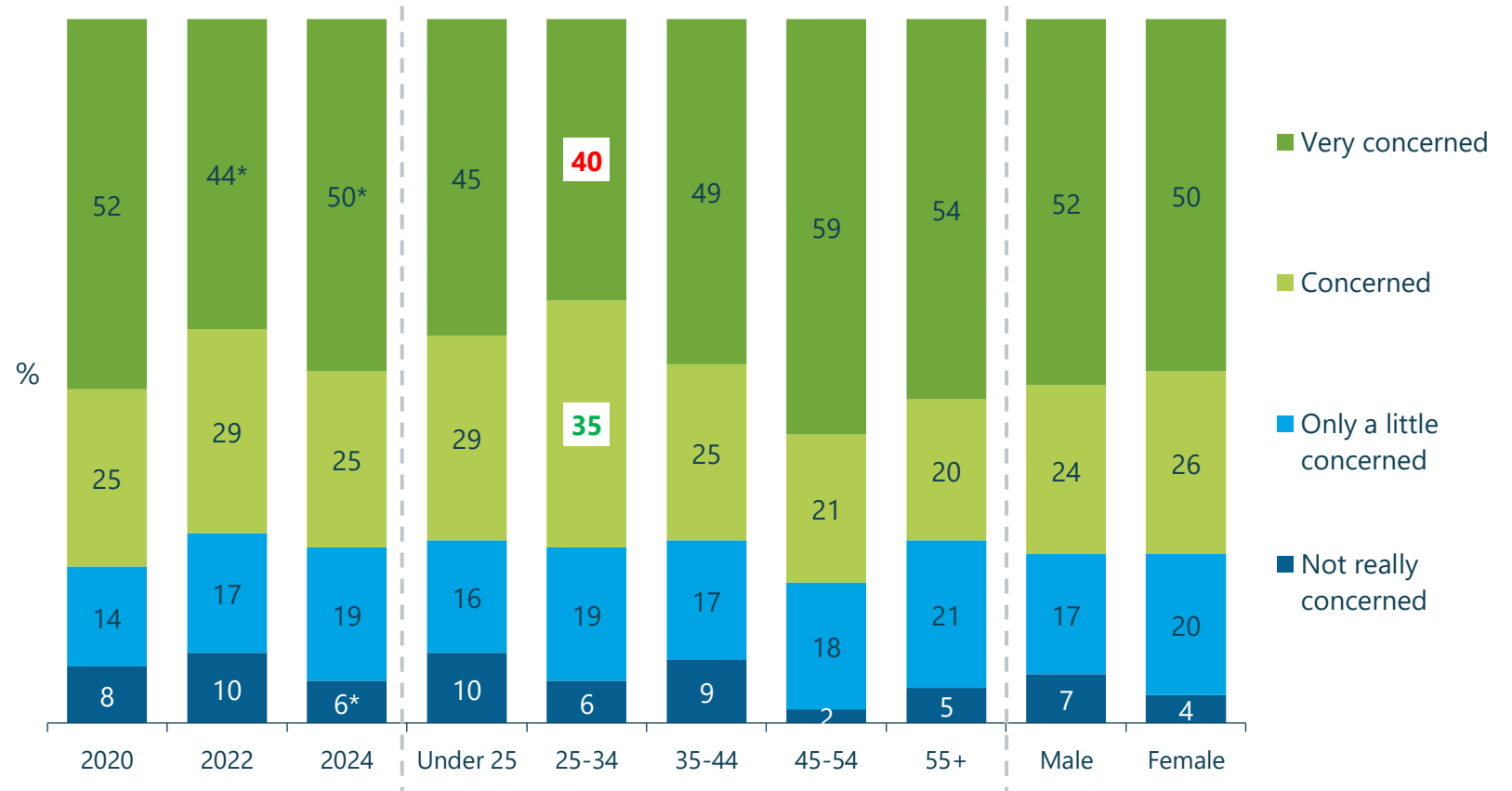
Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)

Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%



CONCERN ABOUT UNAUTHORISED ACCESS BY STAFF

- Concern about unauthorised access by staff remained relatively consistent with 2022, however, the proportion of respondents who indicated that they were very concerned increased significantly.
- Those aged 45-54 showed more concern than any other age group.



Q2. Thinking about the data NSW government agencies might currently hold, such as, transport or health services information, how concerned are you about the following...

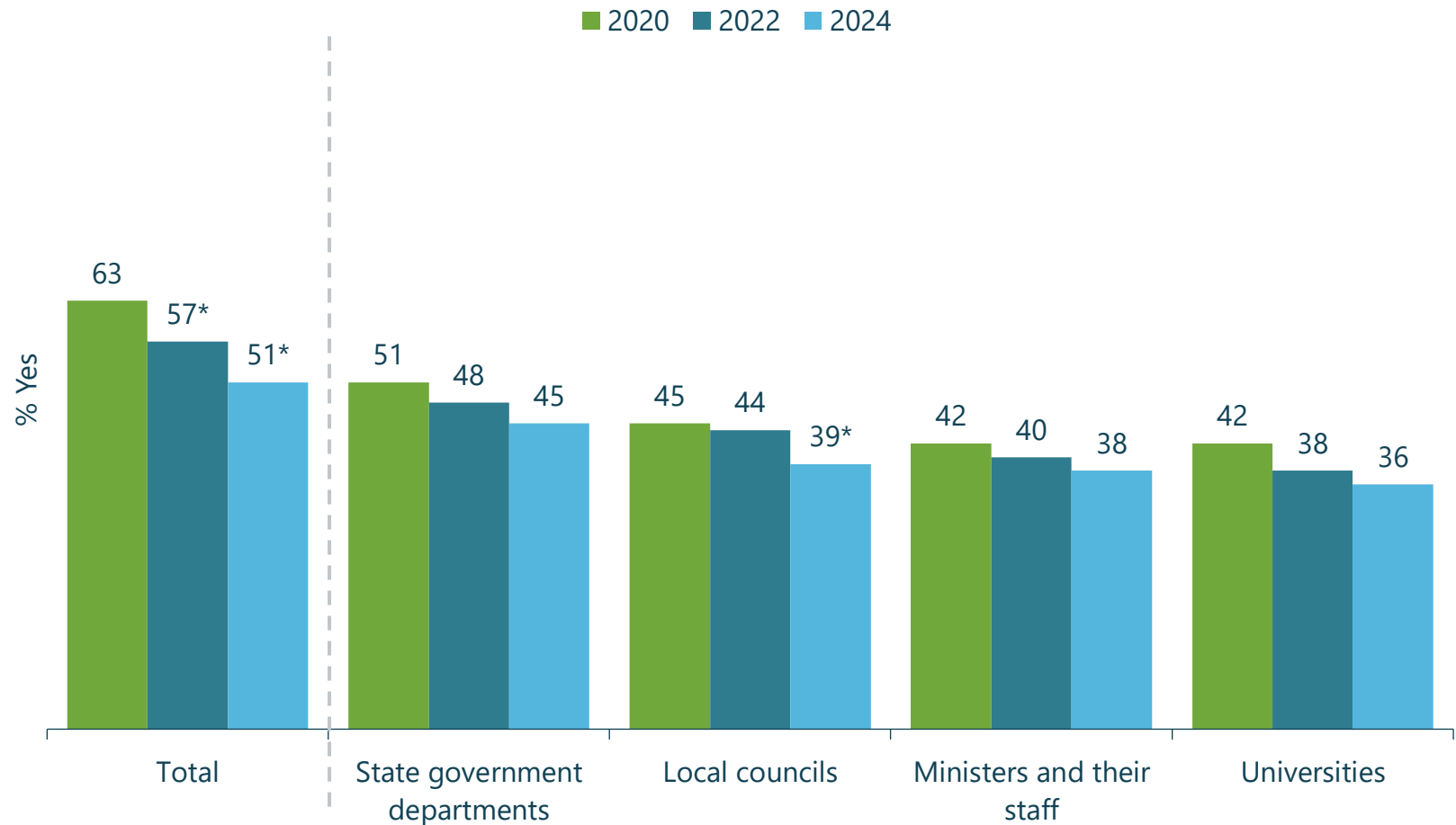
Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)

Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%



AWARENESS OF RIGHT TO LODGE A COMPLAINT OR REVIEW

- Around half of respondents were aware of their right to lodge a complaint and seek an internal review with an agency that they think has breached their privacy.
- For each agency type, awareness of respondents' rights to lodge a complaint or review decreased in 2022 and then again in 2024.



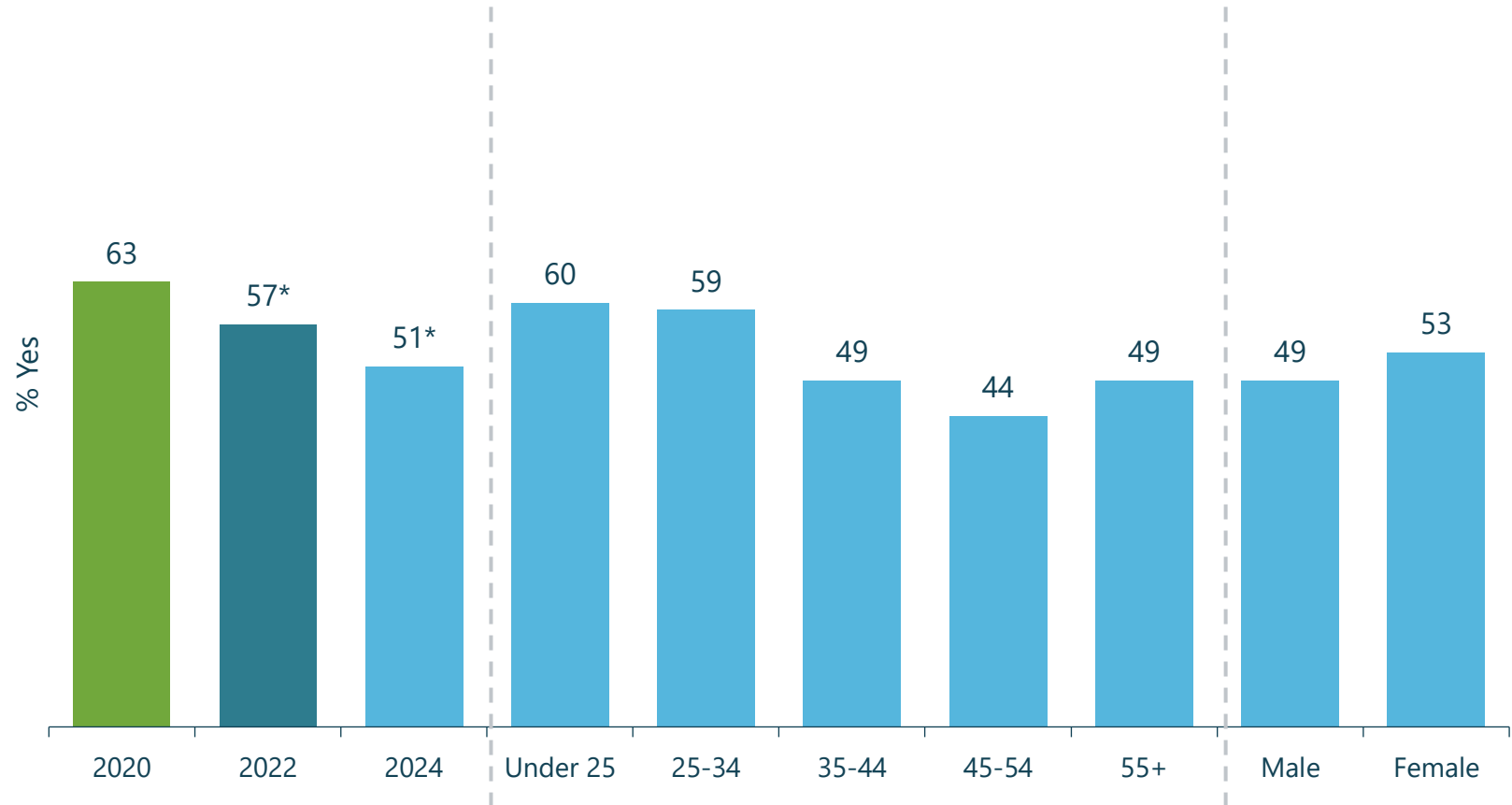
Q3. Did you know, under NSW privacy law, that you have a right to lodge a complaint and seek an internal review to the agency if you think your privacy has been breached by the following agencies...

Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)



TOTAL AWARENESS OF RIGHT TO LODGE A COMPLAINT OR REVIEW

- Total awareness of the right to lodge a complaint or review with an agency decreased significantly this reporting period.
- Awareness ranged according to age group, with respondents under 34 being most aware and those aged 45-54 being least aware.

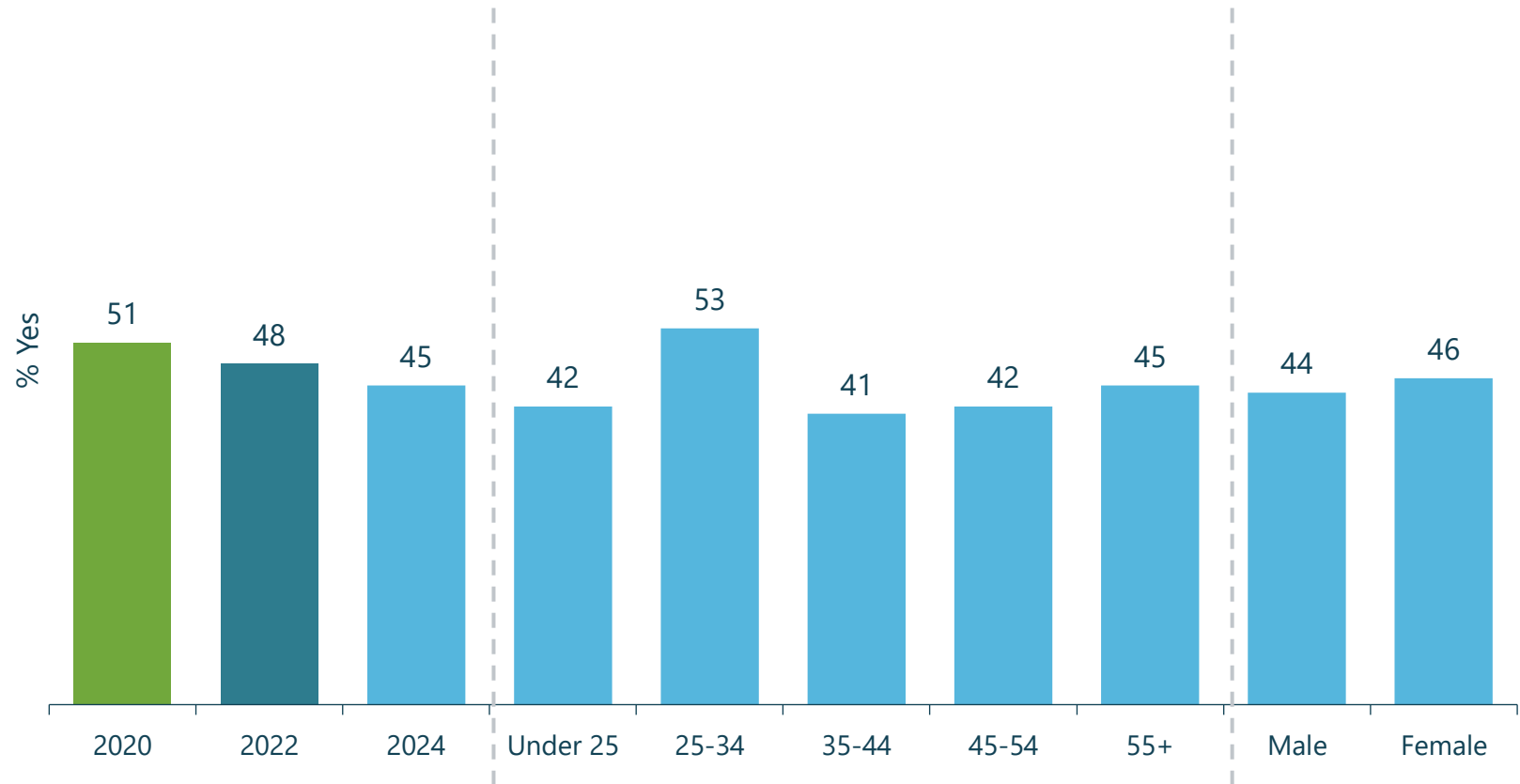


Q3. Did you know, under NSW privacy law, that you have a right to lodge a complaint and seek an internal review to the agency if you think your privacy has been breached by the following agencies...
Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)



AWARENESS OF RIGHT TO LODGE A COMPLAINT OR REVIEW WITH STATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

- There was a slightly decline in awareness of the right to lodge a complaint or review with State Government departments.
- Those most likely to be aware were aged between 25-34.

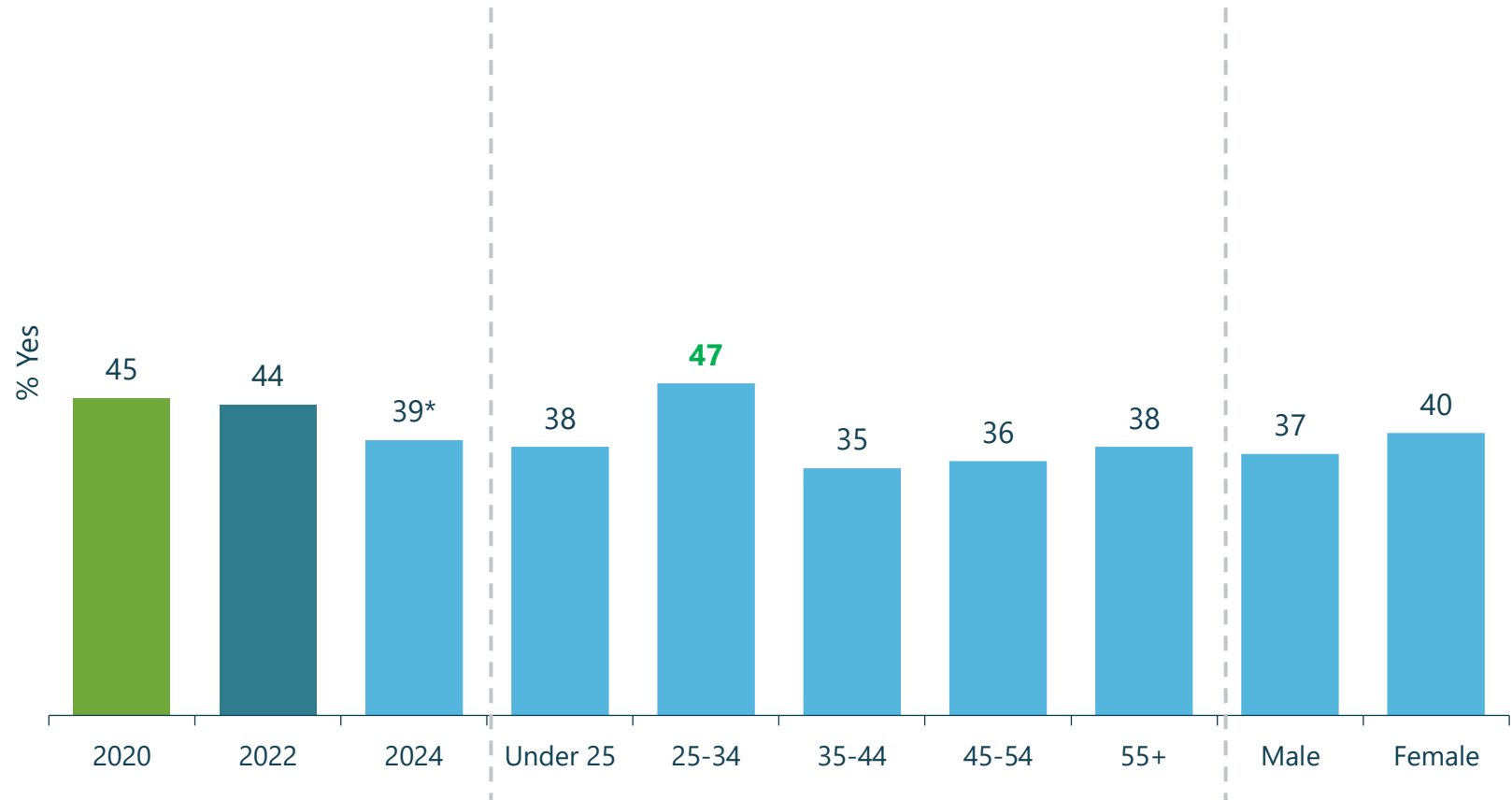


Q3. Did you know, under NSW privacy law, that you have a right to lodge a complaint and seek an internal review to the agency if you think your privacy has been breached by the following agencies...
Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)



AWARENESS OF RIGHT TO LODGE A COMPLAINT OR REVIEW WITH LOCAL COUNCILS

- A significantly lower number of respondents were aware of being able to lodge a complaint with local councils this year, although those aware were more likely to be aged 25-34.



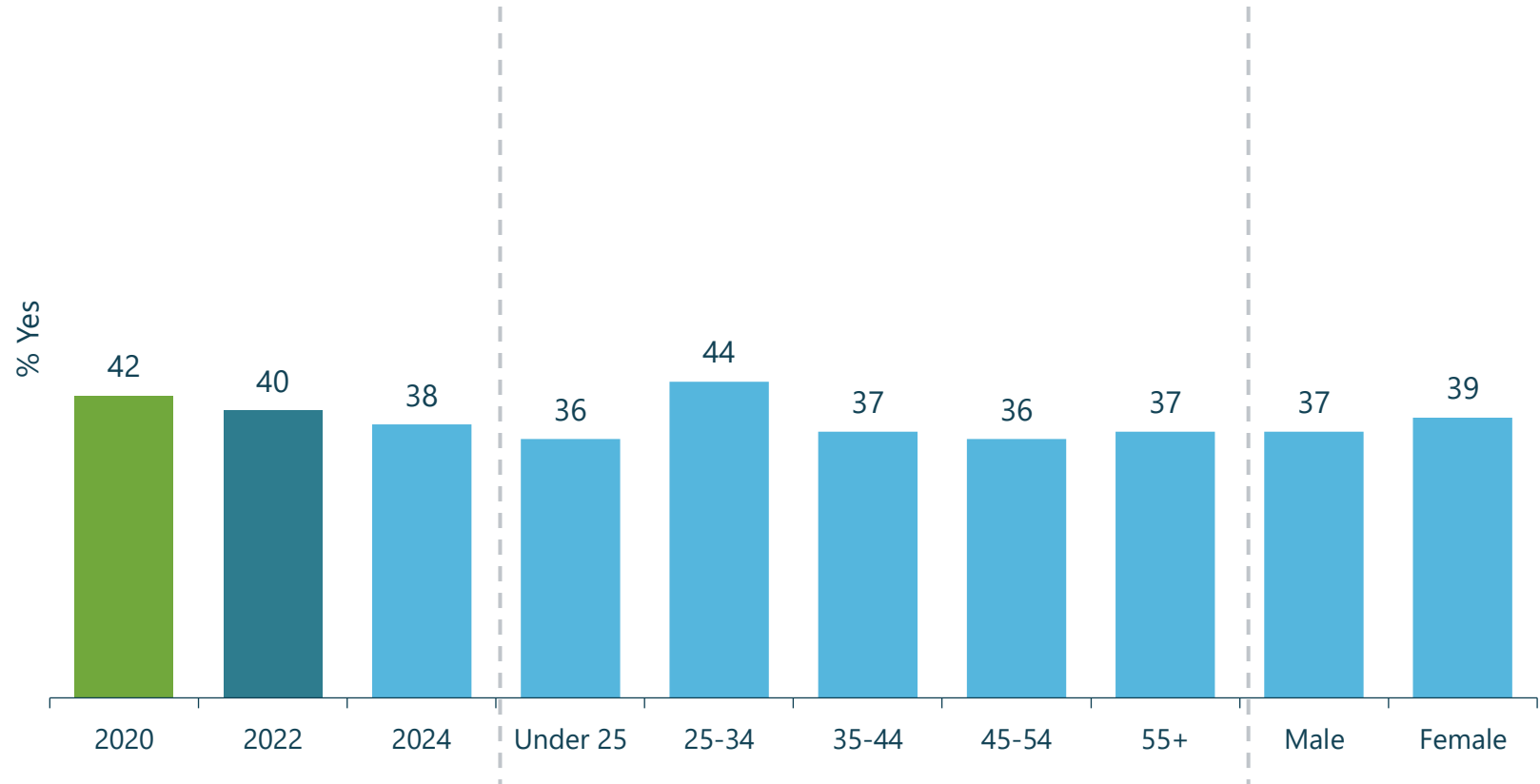
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Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)



AWARENESS OF RIGHT TO LODGE A COMPLAINT OR REVIEW WITH MINISTERS AND THEIR STAFF

- Around one in four were aware of their right to lodge a complaint or review with ministers and their staff, again especially those 25-34 years.

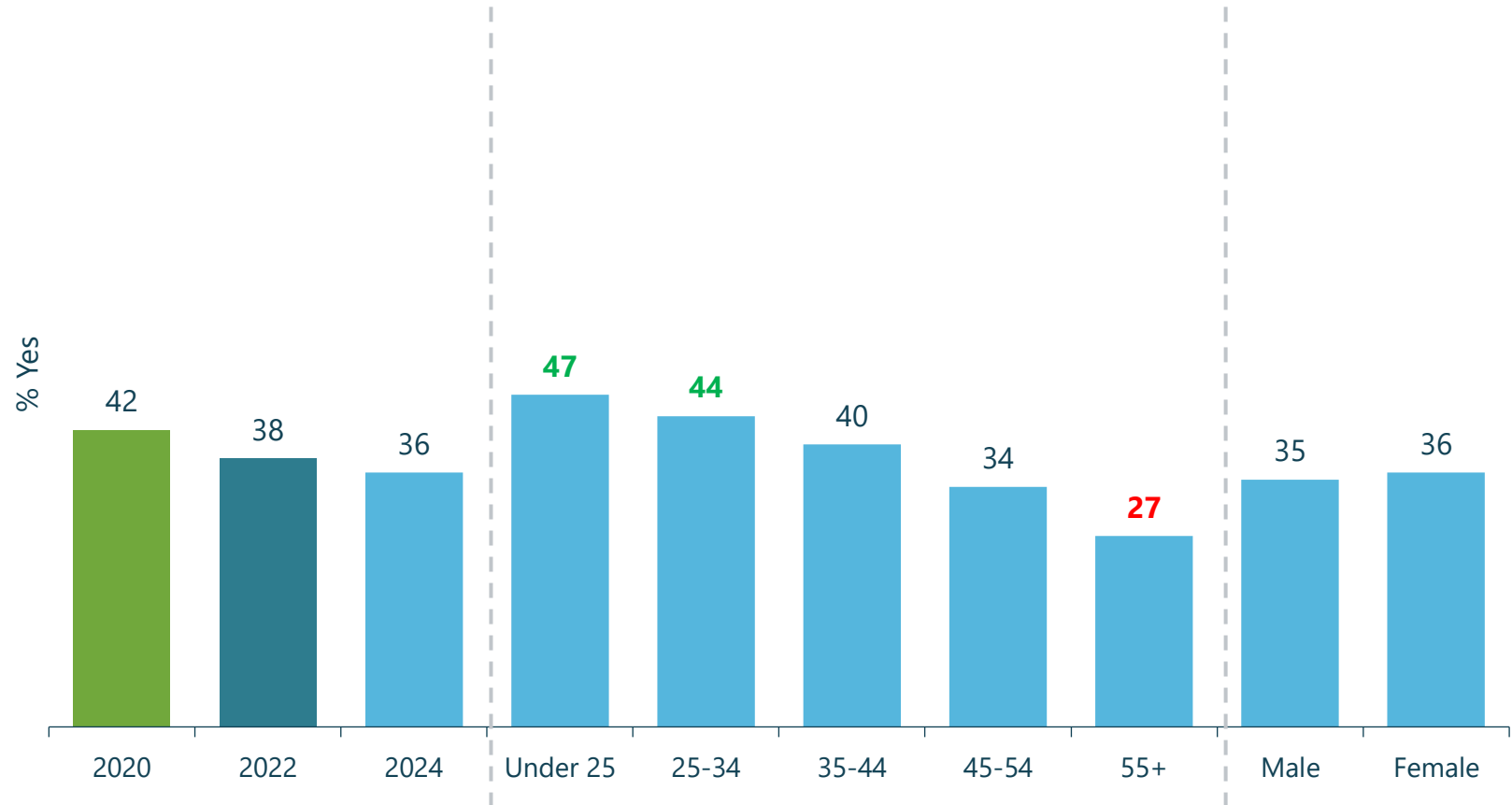


Q3. Did you know, under NSW privacy law, that you have a right to lodge a complaint and seek an internal review to the agency if you think your privacy has been breached by the following agencies...
Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)



AWARENESS OF RIGHT TO LODGE A COMPLAINT OR REVIEW WITH UNIVERSITIES

- Whilst the proportion of respondents who were aware of their right to lodge a complaint or review with universities was slightly lower again this year, younger people under 34 were significantly more likely to be aware of this than respondents 55+.

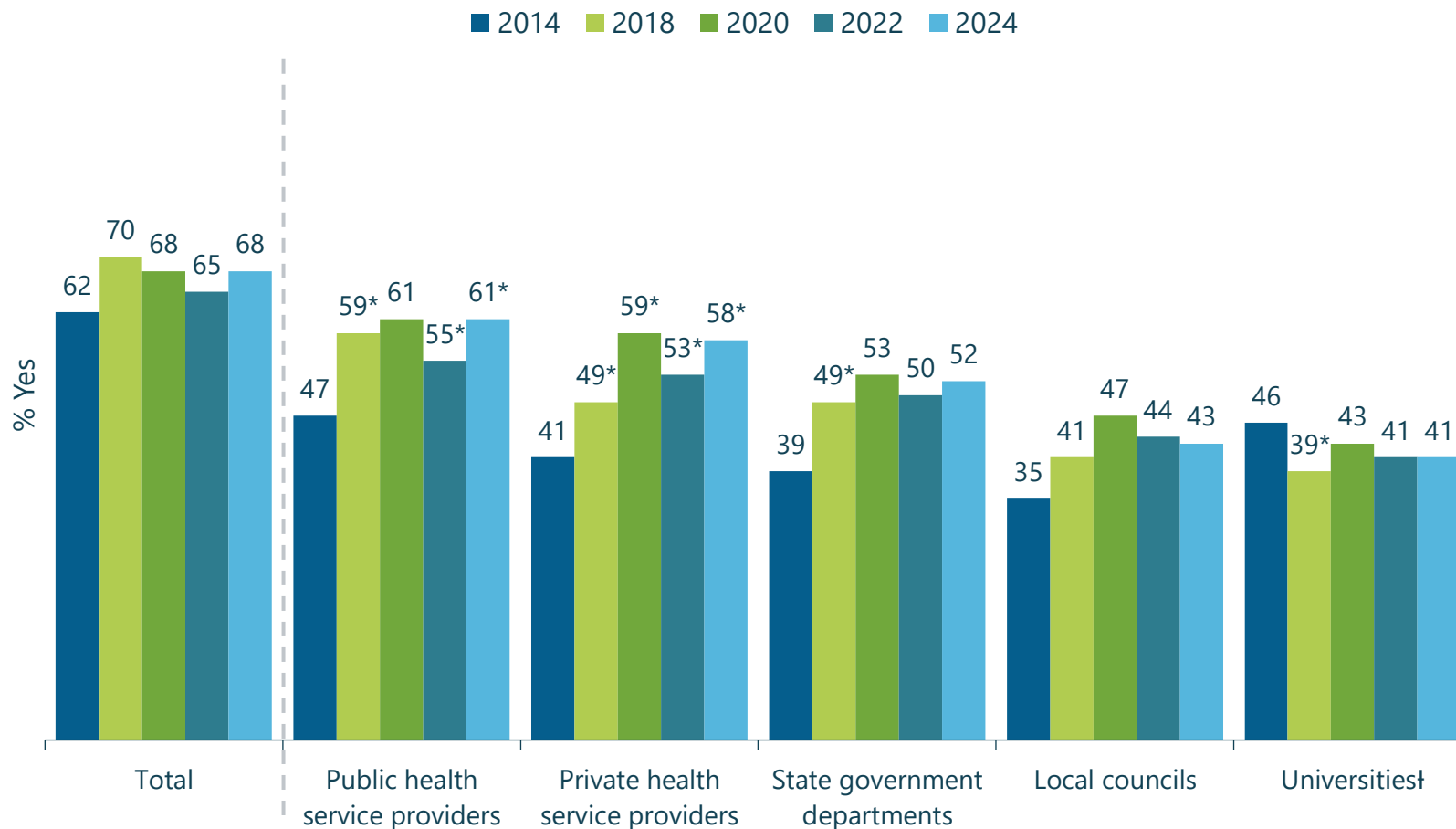


Q3. Did you know, under NSW privacy law, that you have a right to lodge a complaint and seek an internal review to the agency if you think your privacy has been breached by the following agencies...
Base: All respondents (2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)



AWARENESS OF RIGHT TO ACCESS PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Like previous reporting periods, approximately two thirds of respondents were aware of their right to access personal or health information from at least one of the agencies listed.
- This year there were significant increases in awareness accessing information from public and private health service providers.



Q4. Did you know, under NSW privacy law, that you have a right to access any personal or health information held about you by...?†

Base: All respondents (2014 n=340, 2018 n=803, 2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)

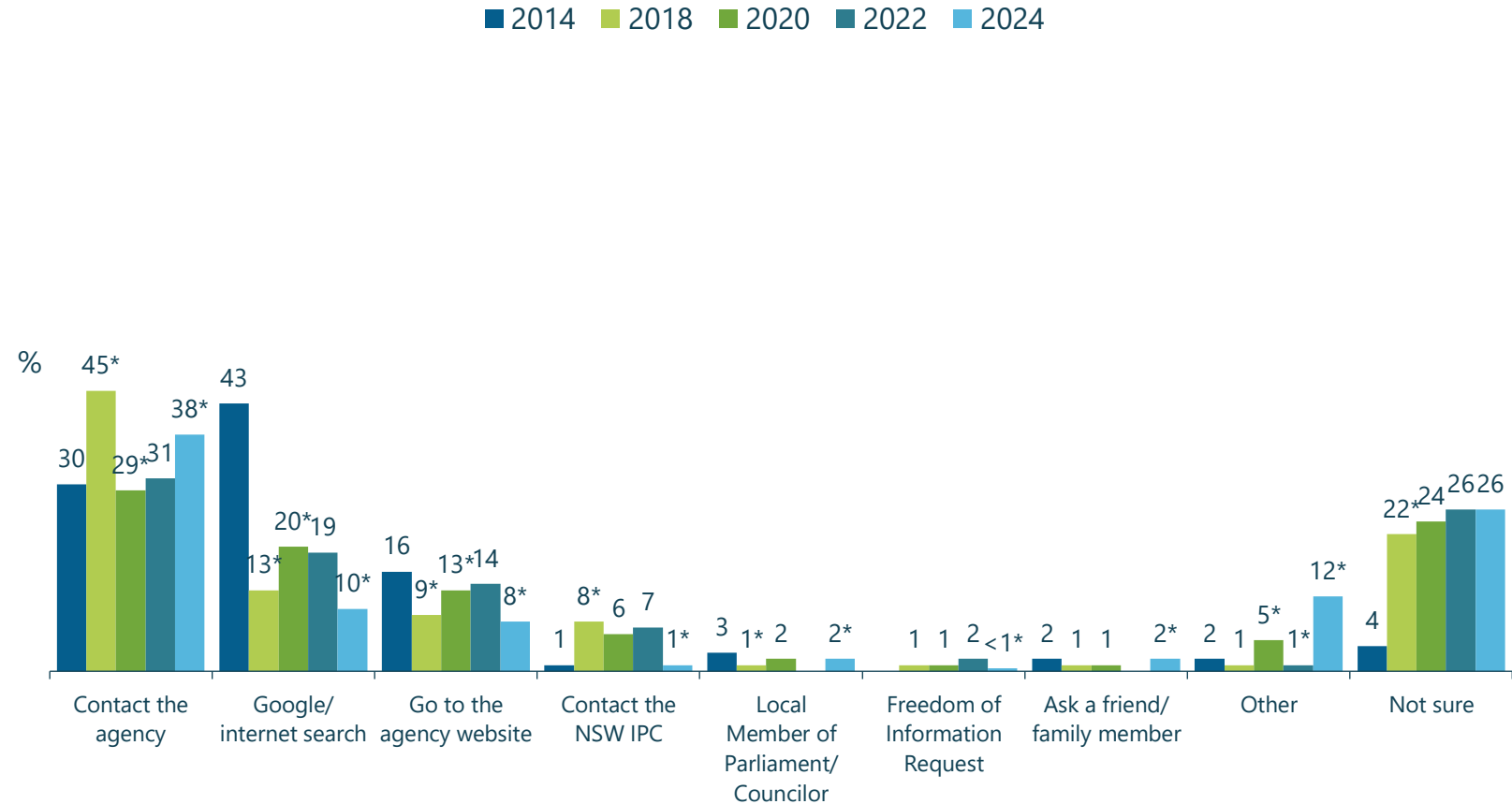
† Wording change in 2018 from 'Public education providers e.g. schools, universities' to 'Universities'

‡ Slight wording change in 2020



FIRST OPTION TO ACCESS PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Similar to previous reporting periods, of the respondents who believed they knew how to access their personal information, many indicated that they would contact the agency.



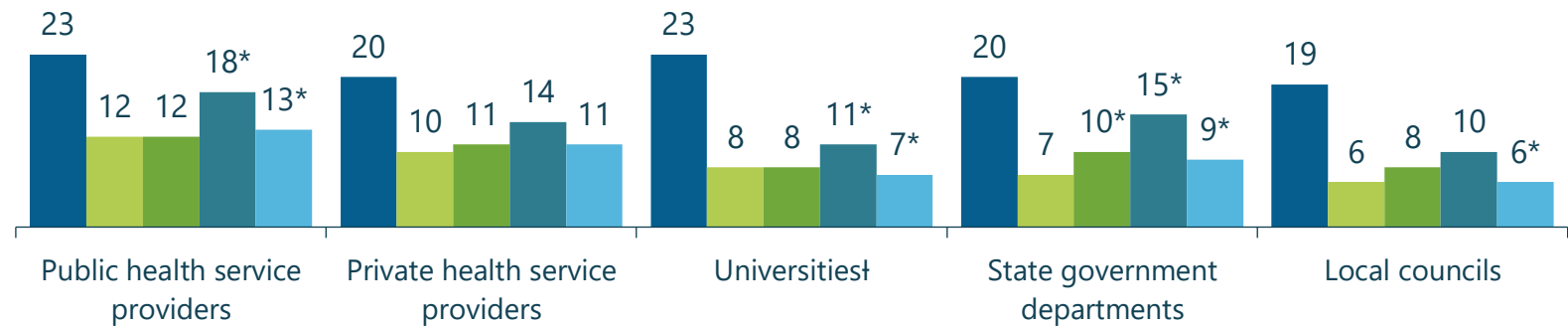
Q5. If you wanted to access your personal information held by agencies under privacy laws, what would you do to get it?† (SR - Unprompted)
Base: All respondents (2014 n=340, 2018 n=803, 2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)
† Slight wording change in 2020



INCIDENCE OF TRYING TO ACCESS PERSONAL INFORMATION

■ 2014 ■ 2018 ■ 2020 ■ 2022 ■ 2024

%



Q6. In the last year, have you ever tried to access personal or health information held about you by any of the following agencies? †

Base: All respondents (2014 n=340, 2018 n=803, 2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)

† Wording change in 2018 from 'Public education providers e.g. schools, universities' to 'Universities'

‡ Slight wording change in 2020

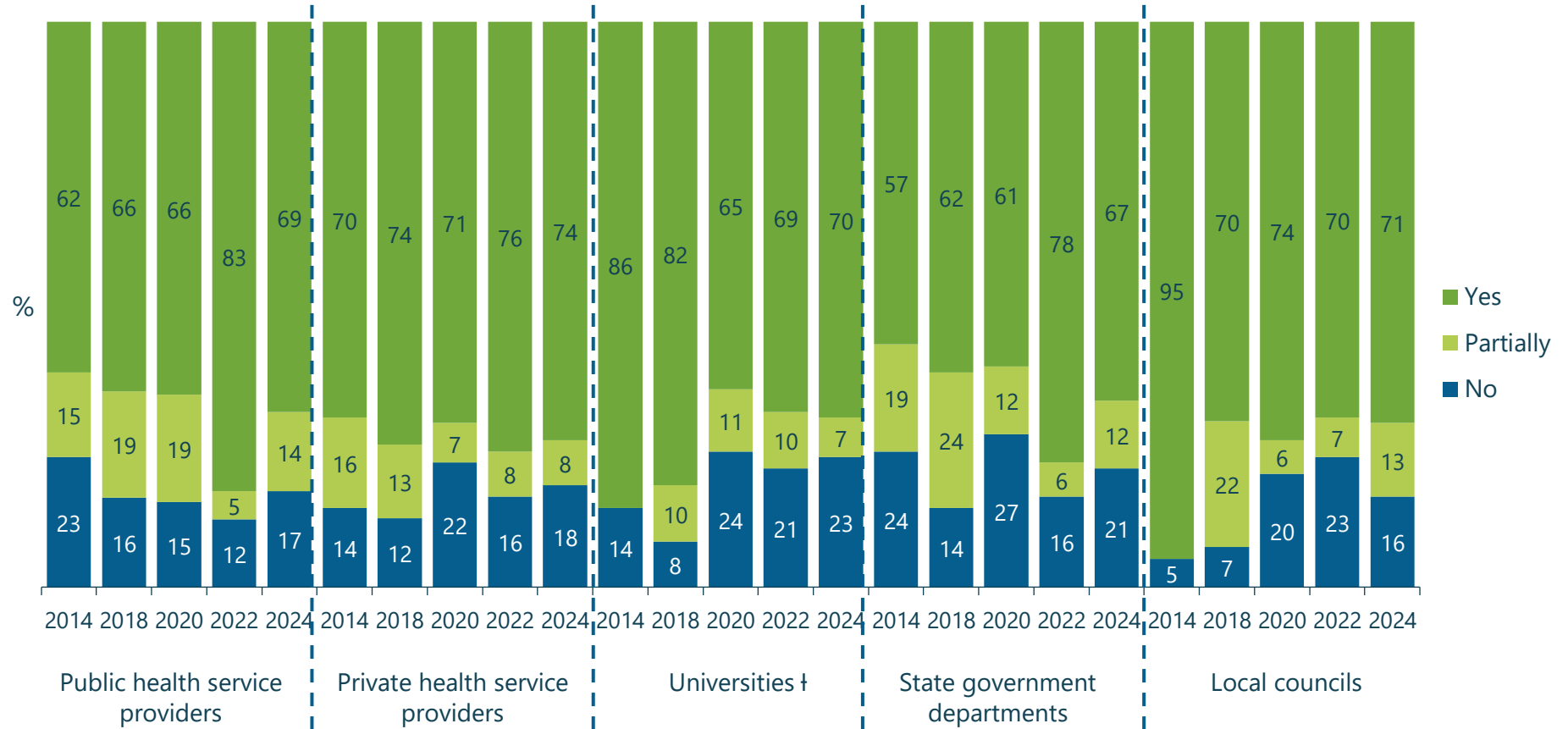
‡‡ 2014 asked 'Have you ever tried...', whereas 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024 asked 'In the last year, have you ever tried...'

- The proportion of respondents who had tried to access personal information in the last year decreased across all agencies.



INCIDENCE OF SUCCESSFULLY ACCESSING PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Respondents were notably less successful this reporting period in fully accessing personal information from public health service providers and state government departments.
- Success in fully accessing information remained relatively consistent across the other agencies.



Q7. Were you successful in accessing your personal or health information from...?#

Base: Respondents that attempted to access personal information from that service

Public health service providers: (2014 n=17*, 2018 n=95, 2020 n=102, 2022 n=146, 2024 n=115), Private health service providers: (2014 n=13*, 2018 n=81, 2020 n=88, 2022 n=116, 2024 n=104), Universities: (2014 n=10*, 2018 n=62, 2020 n=64, 2022 n=88, 2024 n=72), State gov departments: (2014 n=13*, 2018 n=58, 2020 n=85, 2022 n=117, 2024 n=79), Local councils: (2014 n=13*, 2018 n=52, 2020 n=65, 2022 n=77, 2024 n=47)

† Wording change in 2018 from 'Public education providers e.g. schools, universities' to 'Universities'

Please note: Significance testing was not performed on this data due to significant differences in base sizes

Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%

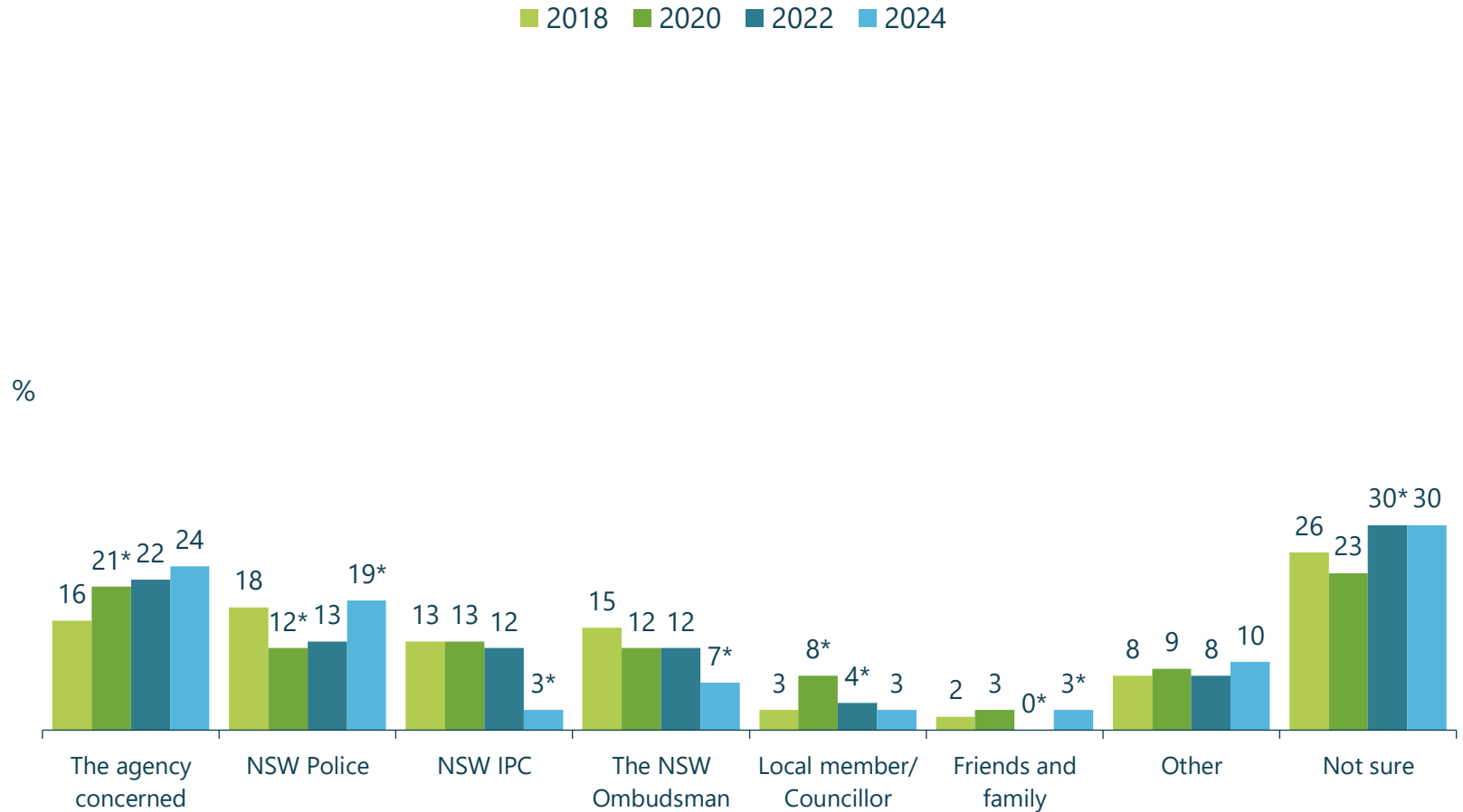
Slight wording change in 2020

* CAUTION: Small base size



AVENUE OF REPORTING MISUSE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Of the respondents who believed they knew who to contact to report misuse of their personal information, many indicated that they would contact the agency concerned or the police.

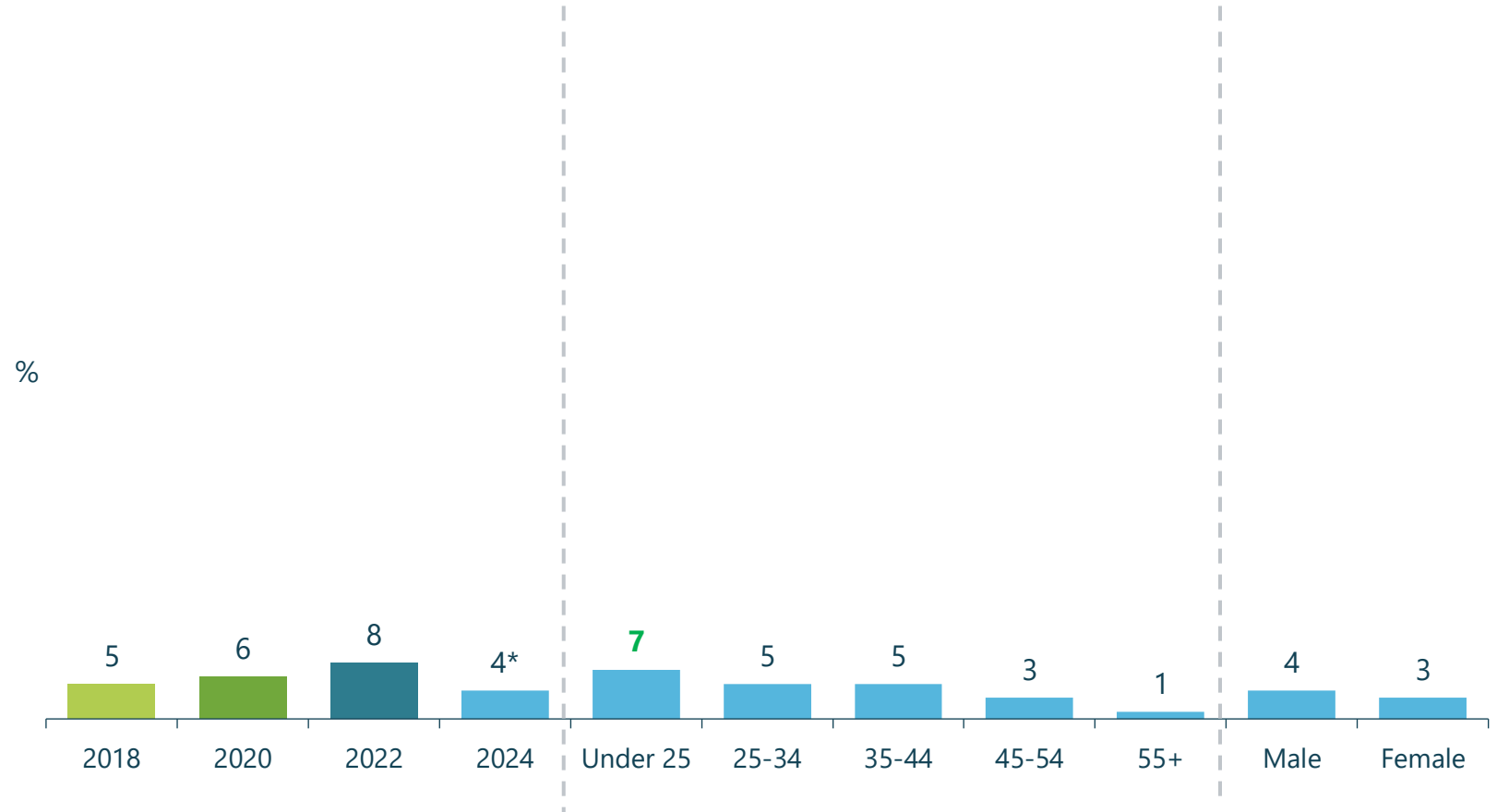


Q8. If you wanted to report misuse of your personal information to someone, who would you be most likely to contact? (SR - Unprompted)
Base: All respondents (2018 n=803, 2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)



INCIDENCE OF MAKING A PRIVACY COMPLAINT

- The proportion of respondents who had 'ever' made a privacy complaint halved this reporting period.
- Those under 25 were significantly more likely to have 'ever' made a privacy complaint.



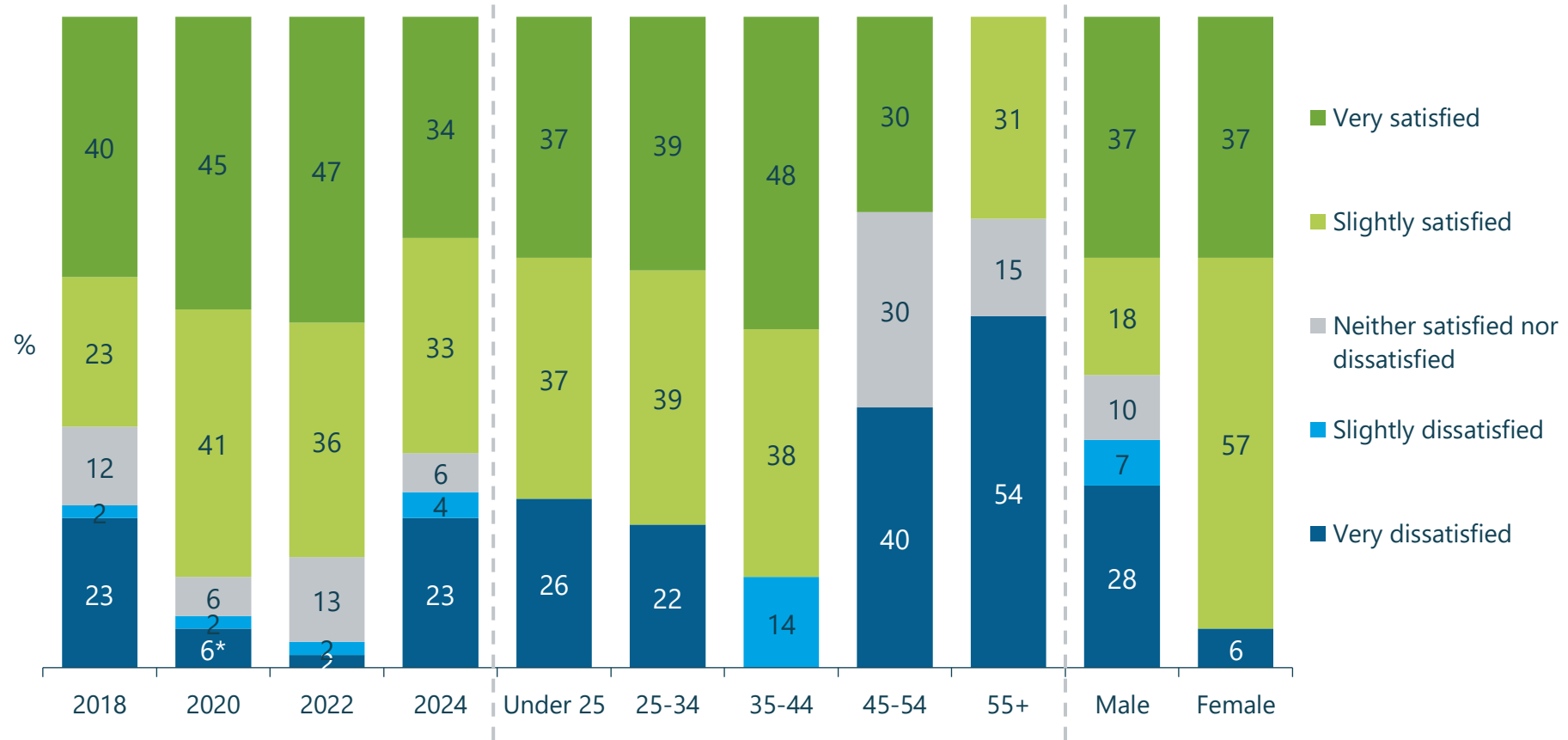
Q9. Have you ever made a privacy complaint under NSW privacy law about the behaviour of a NSW government department, health service, university or local council?†

Base: All respondents (2018 n=803, 2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)



SATISFACTION WITH OUTCOME OF PRIVACY COMPLAINT

- Since 2022, there has been a noticeable increase in the proportion of respondents who were very dissatisfied with the outcome of their privacy complaint.
- Those aged 45 years and over and males were more likely to be dissatisfied than their other counterparts.



Q10. And how satisfied would you say you were with the outcome of this privacy complaint?

Base: Respondents who had made a complaint (2018 n=40, 2020 n=49, 2022 n=67, 2024 n=32*)

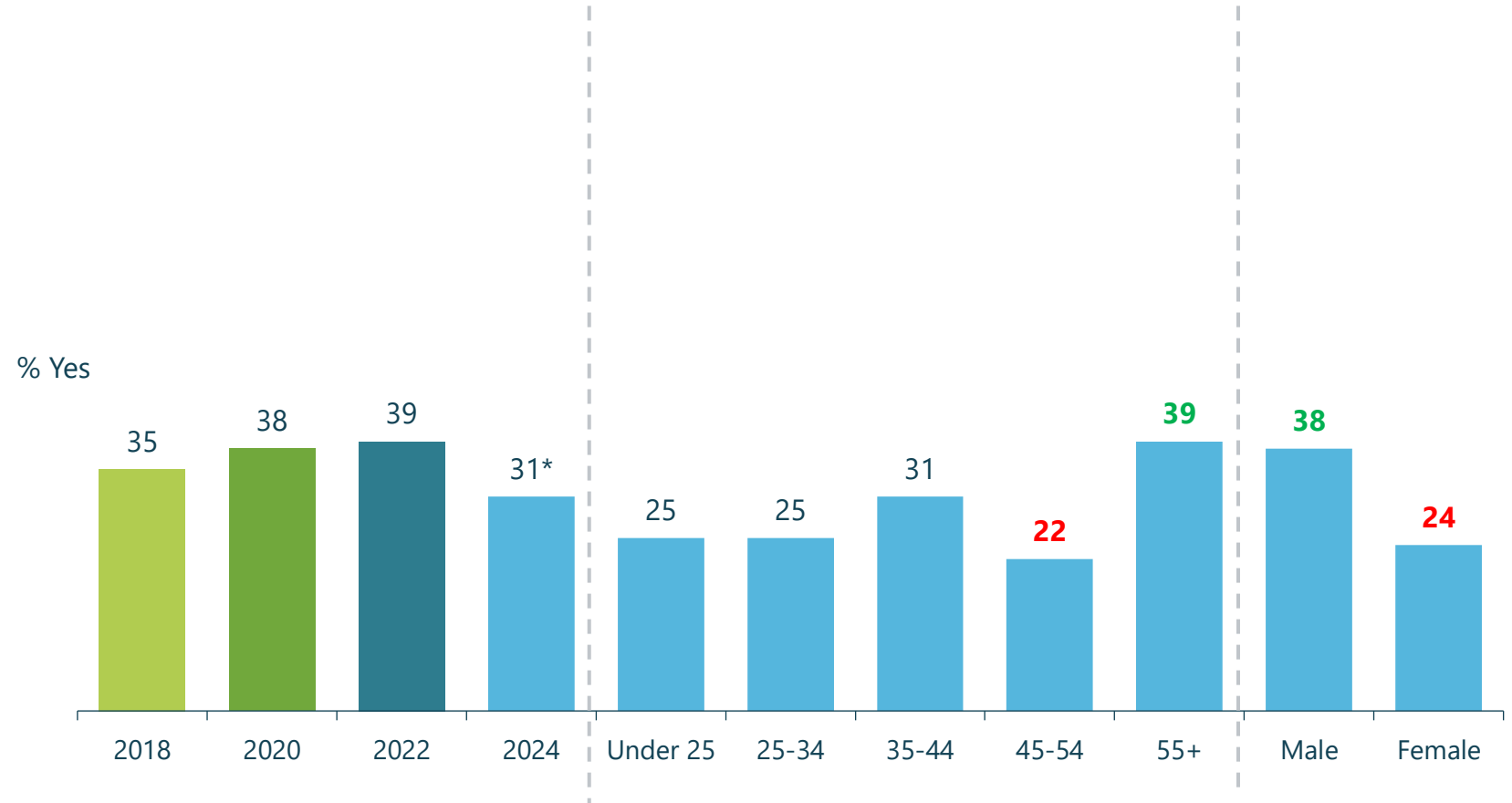
*Please note: Significance testing was not performed on this data due to the significant differences in the base size from the previous year

Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%



AWARENESS OF NSW PRIVACY COMMISSIONER FOR COMPLAINTS

- Awareness of the NSW Privacy Commissioner and their role decreased significantly this year.
- Those who were familiar with the NSW Privacy Commissioner were older respondents and males.



Q11. Are you aware that a NSW Privacy Commissioner exists to uphold NSW privacy laws and to investigate complaints concerning the misuse of personal data by NSW agencies? † ‡

Base: All respondents (2018 n=803, 2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)

† Slight wording change in 2020

‡ Slight wording change in 2024



DEMOGRAPHICS



GENDER AND AGE



%	2014 (n=340)	2016 (n=340)	2018 (n=803)	2020 (n=802)	2022 (n=800)	2024 (n=809)
Gender						
Male	44	49	48	50	50	50
Female	56	51	52	50	50	50
Gender neutral †	Not an option in 2014, 2016 or 2018			-	-	<1
Prefer not to indicate †	Not an option in 2014, 2016 or 2018			-	-	<1
Age						
18-24	12	15	15	18	18	10
25-34	12	20	21	11	12	19
35-44	8	16	17	13	18	20
45-54	17	18	16	19	12	14
55-64	12	12	12	11	7	15
65-74	38	20	10	14	13	15
75+			8	14	20	8

D1. Which of the following age brackets do you belong to?

D2. Do you identify as being...?

Base: All respondents (2016 n=340, 2018 n=803, 2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)

†Options added in 2020

Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%

WORK STATUS



%	2014 (n=340)	2016 (n=340)	2018 (n=803)	2020 (n=802)	2022 (n=800)	2024 (n=809)
Working status						
Working full time	Not asked in 2014	89	39	34	34	47
Working part time			17	14	12	18
Retired		4	23	29	32	19
Student		4	9	12	11	6
Unemployed		3	5	6	5	3
Engaged in home duties		1	7	4	5	5
Refused		-	1	1	1	1

D3. Which of these categories best describes you?
 Base: All respondents (2016 n=340, 2018 n=803, 2020 n=802, 2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)
 Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%

MAIN LANGUAGE SPOKEN



%	2014 (n=340)	2016 (n=340)	2018 (n=803)	2020 (n=802)	2022 (n=800)	2024 (n=809)
Main Language Spoken						
English	Not asked in 2014 or 2016		90	86	88	85
Cantonese/Mandarin			1	6	4	4
Korean			-	1	<1	<1
Hindi			1	1	1	2
Arabic (incl. Lebanese)			1	1	<1	1
Indonesian			<1	1	<1	<1
Other			6	5	6	8



SUMMARY





Importance of Access to Information

- An increasing number of respondents (over 9 in 10) feel that it is important that their personal information is protected by NSW government agencies.



Concern with Misuse

- Concern with all forms of breaches and misuse continues to be high and has increased since the last reporting period.
- However, fewer this year (around half) were aware of their right to lodge a complaint and seek an internal review with an agency that they think has breached their privacy.



Awareness of the Right to Access Information

- Two thirds of respondents were aware of their right to access personal or health information from at least one of the agencies listed, which is a slight increase from 2022.
- Of those who believed they knew how to access their personal information held by agencies, most suggested they would contact the agency involved.



Incidence of Accessing Information

- Across each agency, respondents were less likely to have tried to access personal or health information in the last year than those in 2022.



Success in Accessing Information

- Respondents were notably less successful this reporting period in fully accessing personal information from public health service providers and state government departments, however, success remained relatively consistent across the other agencies.



Point of contact

- Of those who believed they knew who to report misuse of their personal information, the leading avenues were the agency concerned and the police.



Complaint Outcome

- This reporting period, less than 5% of respondents had ever made a privacy complaint. Respondents were typically less satisfied with the outcome of their privacy complaint than those in 2022.



Awareness of the NSW Privacy Commissioner

- Under one third of respondents were aware of the NSW Privacy Commissioner, which is a significant decrease from 2022.



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