

# IPC Community Attitudes Study

## Privacy Breaches

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.**

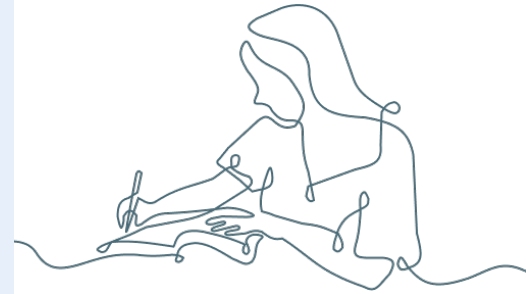
A phone and online survey amongst n=809 NSW residents aged 18+ years was conducted in February 2024.

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 (\*)





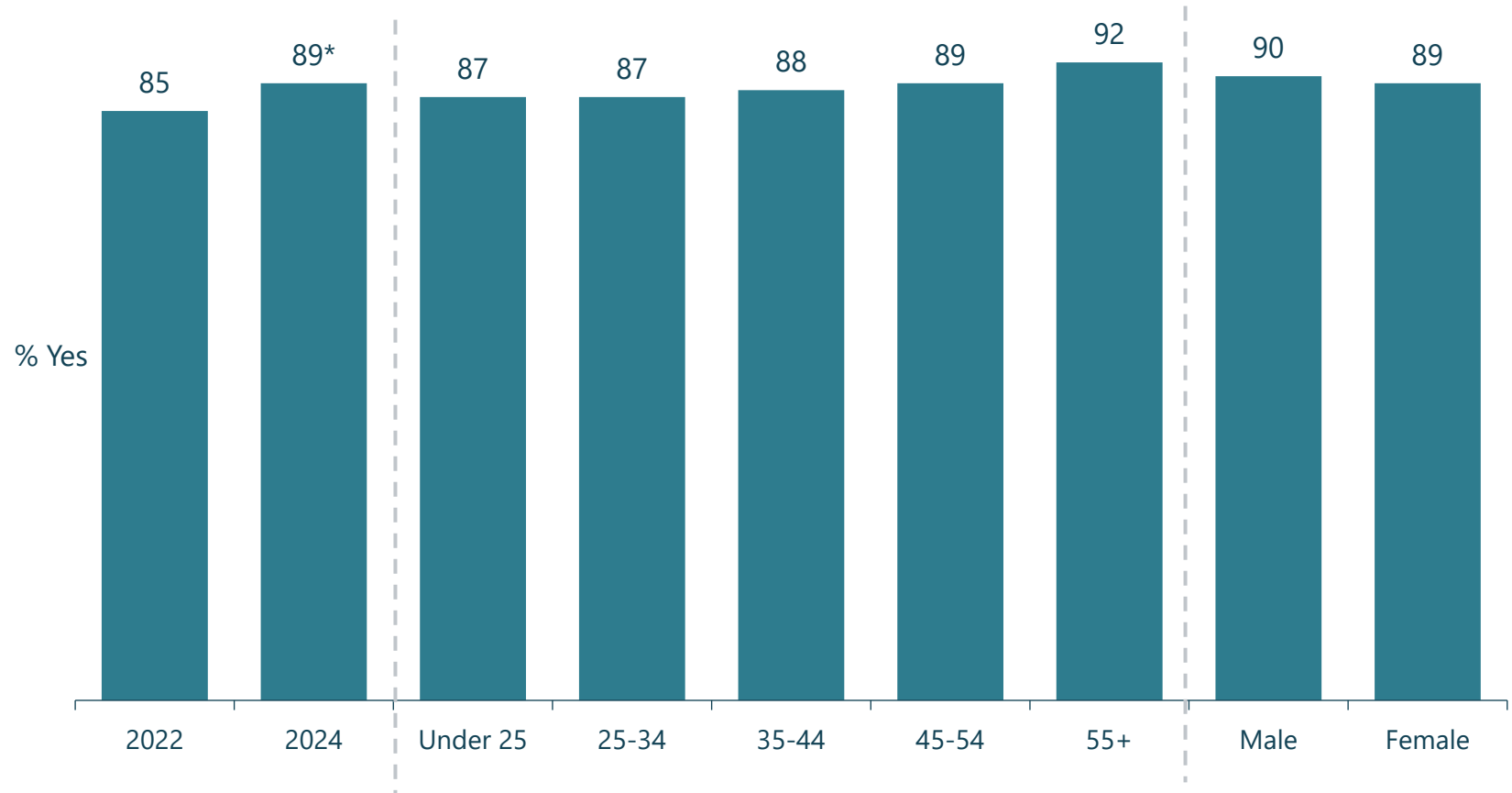
# PRIVACY BREACH





## AGREEMENT THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE ASSISTANCE WHEN DATA IS BREACHED

- This reporting period, almost 9 in 10 respondents agreed that Government should provide assistance when data is breached.
- Agreement increased slightly with age and was consistent across gender.

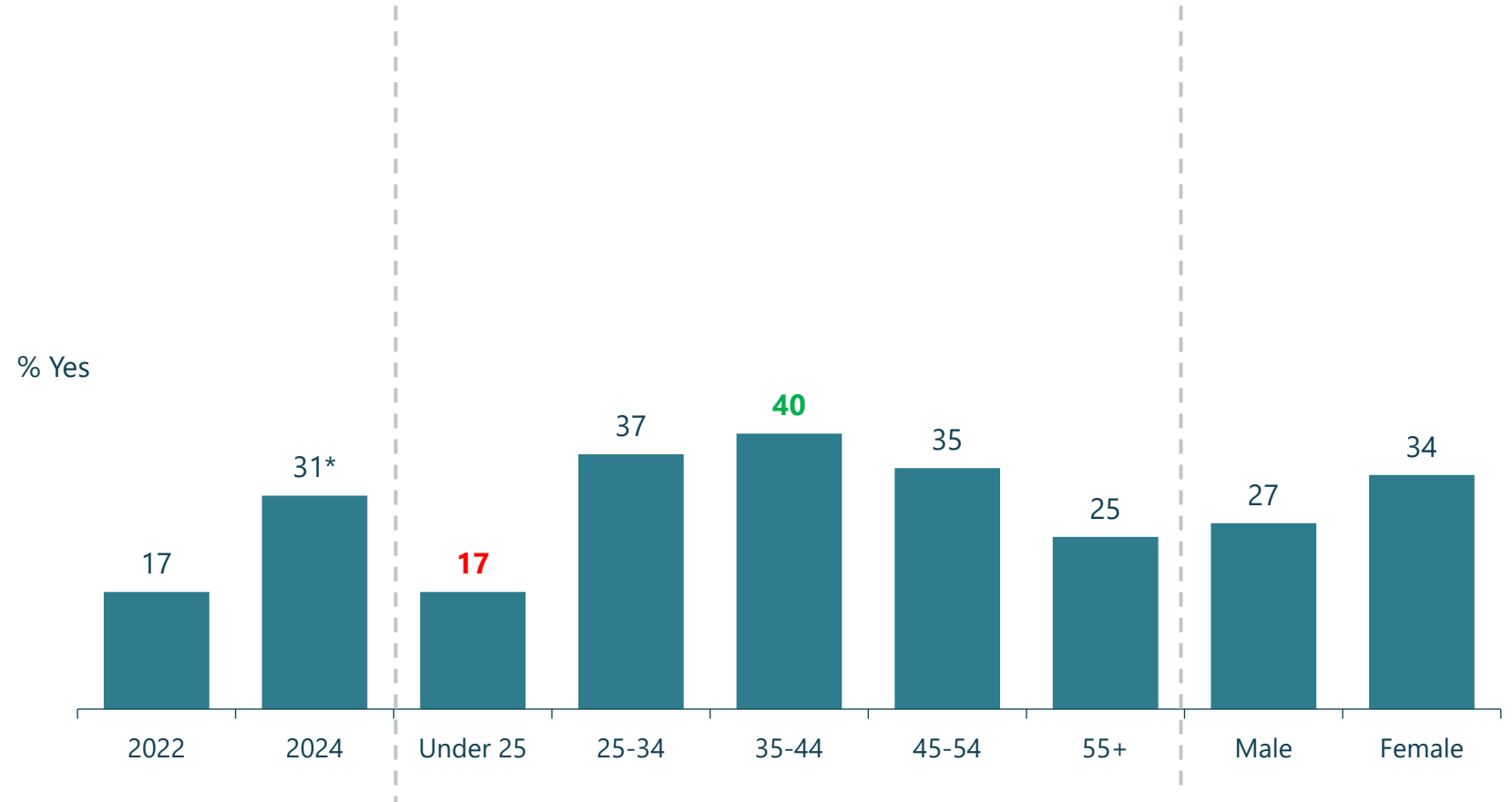


Q27. Do you think Government should provide assistance when there is a breach of your personal information by a government agency?  
Base: All respondents (2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)



# INCIDENCE OF BEING AFFECTED BY DATA BREACH

- Almost one third of respondents in 2024 had been affected by a data breach, which is a significant increase from the previous reporting period.
- Incidence varied among age groups, with respondents under 25 being the least likely to be affected and those aged between 35 and 44 being the most likely.

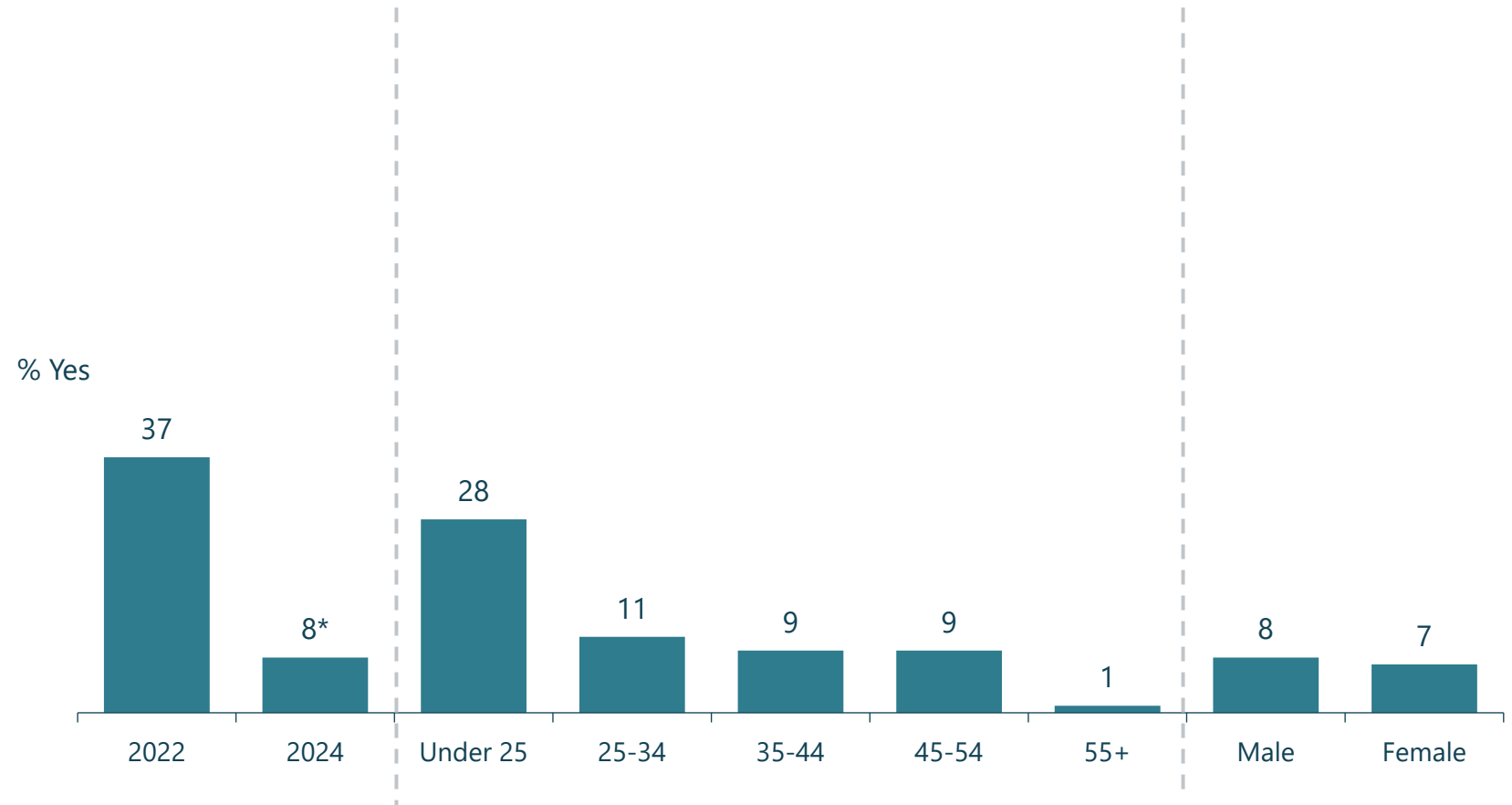


Q28. Have you been affected by a data breach?  
Base: All respondents (2022 n=800, 2024 n=809)



# INCIDENCE OF NSW GOVERNMENT AGENCY BEING BREACHED

- A significantly decreased proportion of respondents who had been affected by a data breach (less than 1 in 10) indicated that it occurred at a NSW government agency.



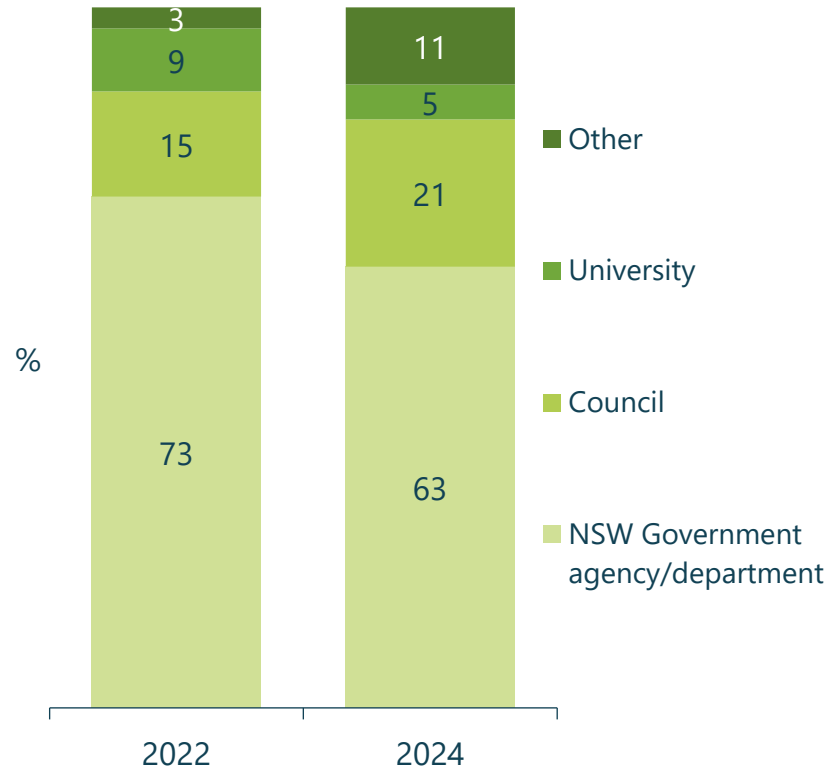
Q29. Was the organisation where the breach occurred a NSW government agency?  
Base: All respondents who had been affected by a data breach (2022 n=137, 2024 n=254)  
Please note: Significance testing was not performed on the cross-tabulations due to the small group base sizes



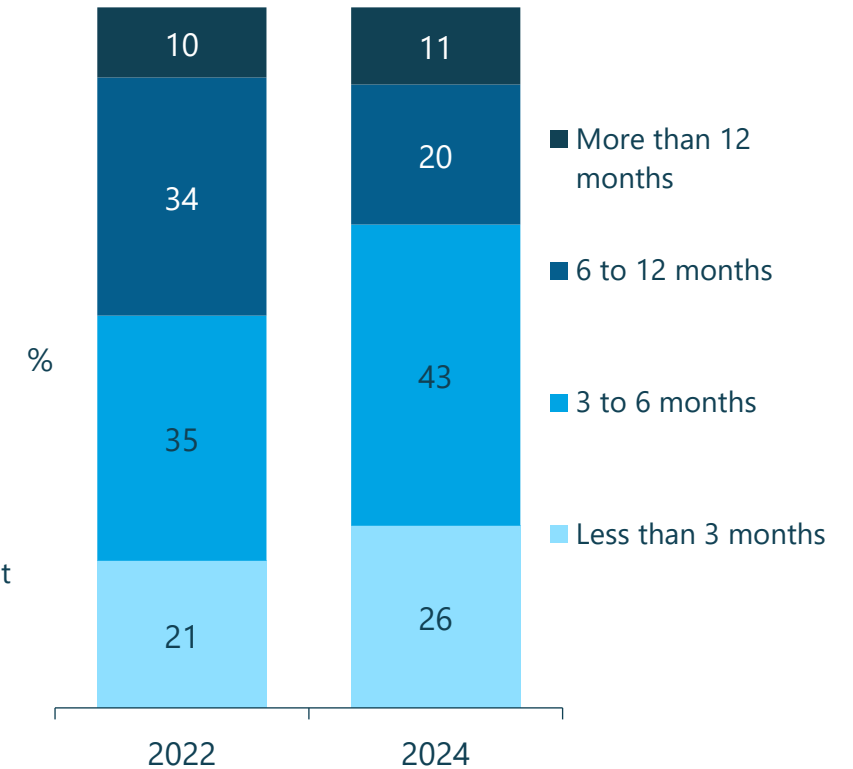
# TYPE OF GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION AND NOTIFICATION TIMING

- Whilst there were less breaches overall from NSW government organisations, respondents' data continued to be most commonly breached at NSW Government agencies / departments.
- Almost 7 in 10 respondents in 2024 were notified of the breach within 6 months, which is a noticeable improvement from the last reporting period.

### Type of Government Organisation



### Notification After Breach



Q30. What type of government organisation was it? Was it a:

Q31. When were you notified of the breach?

Base: All respondents who were affected by a data breach which occurred at a government agency (2022 n=51\*, 2024 n=22\*)

\*Please note, due to the small base size this data may not be representative of NSW residents who have experienced government data breaches.

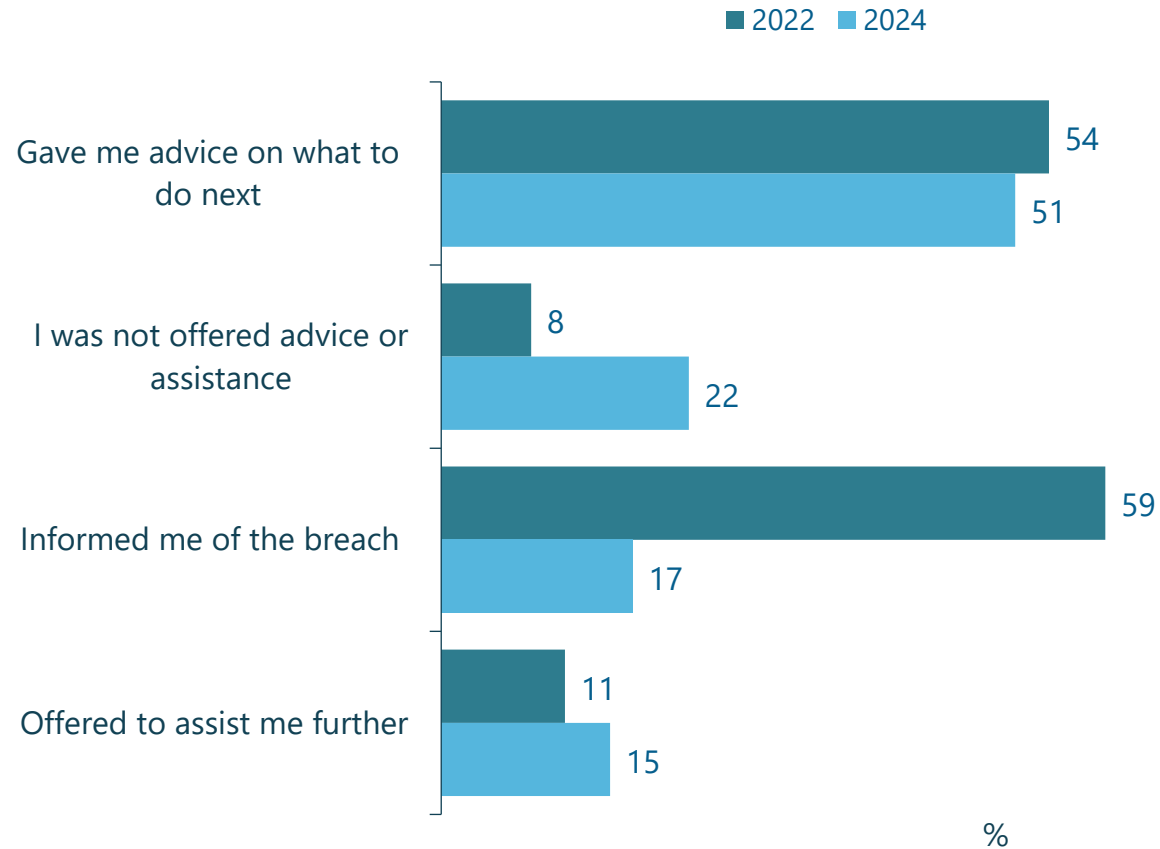
Please note: Percentages have been amended so they add to 100%

Please note: Significance testing was not performed on this data due to the significant difference in the base size from the previous reporting period



## ASSISTANCE OFFERED BY AGENCY

- Almost one quarter of respondents affected by a government data breach felt that they were not offered advice or assistance from that agency.
- A noticeably lower proportion of respondents this reporting period indicated that the agency informed them of the breach.



Q32. What did the government agency do to assist you?

Base: All respondents who were affected by a data breach which occurred at a government agency (2022 n=51\*, 2024 n=22\*)

\*Please note, due to the small base size this data may not be representative of NSW residents who have experienced government data breaches.

Please note: Significance testing was not performed on this data due to the significant difference in the base size from the previous reporting period





## INFORMATION INVOLVED IN THE BREACH

- Almost half of respondents who had experienced a breach by a NSW government agency indicated that their email and / or phone number was shared.
- However, an increased proportion of respondents since 2022 indicated that there was no financial and/or identity information involved.

Contact information involved	2022 (n=51) %	2024 (n=22) %
My email was shared	41	48
My phone number was shared	37	46
My personal address	35	33
My personal information was provided to another person	21	23
I received personal information of another person	13	4
No contact information was involved	16	17
Other	-	4

Financial information involved	2022 (n=51) %	2024 (n=22) %
Banking details	47	47
Credit card	41	21
Tax file number	12	12
No financial information was involved	31	41

Identity information involved	2022 (n=51) %	2024 (n=22) %
NSW drivers' licence	47	39
Birth certificate	27	35
Medicare card	21	20
Passport	22	19
Other	2	3
No identity information was involved	24	29

Q33. What contact information was involved in the breach?

Q34. What financial information was involved?

Q35. What identity information was involved?

Base: All respondents who were affected by a data breach which occurred at a government agency (2022 n=51\*, 2024 n=22\*)

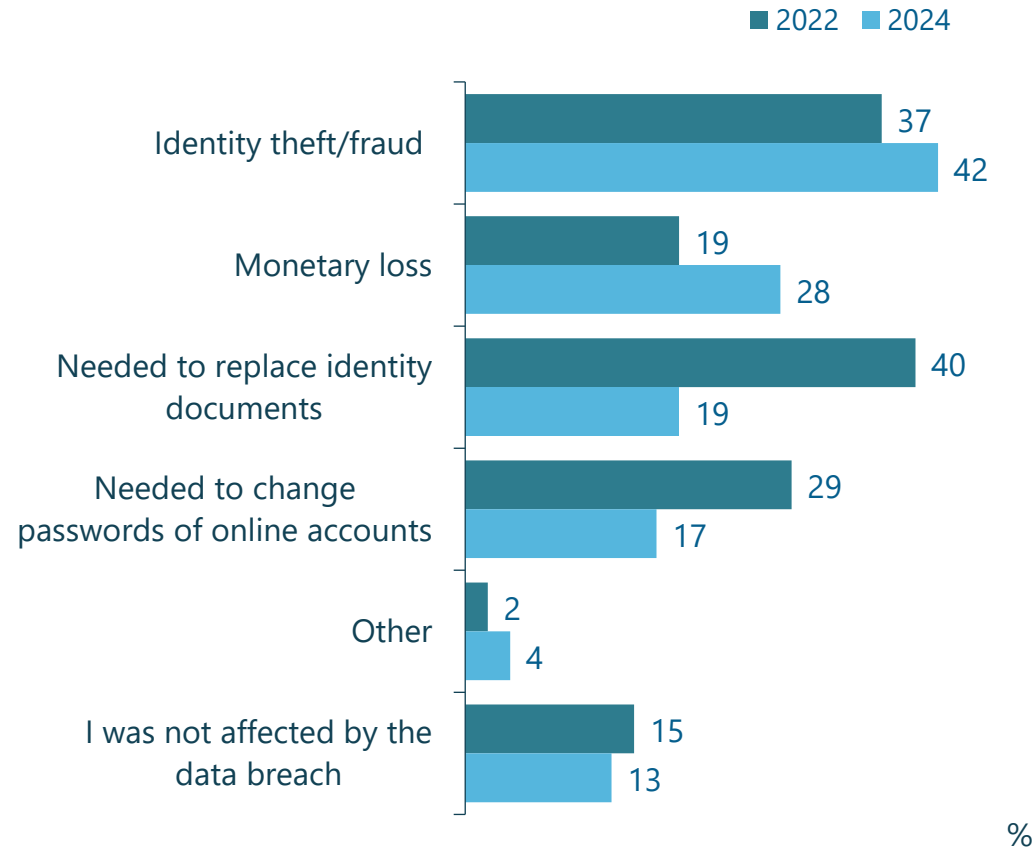
\*Please note, due to the small base size this data may not be representative of NSW residents who have experienced government data breaches.

Please note: Significance testing was not performed on this data due to the significant difference in the base size from the previous reporting period



## AFFECT OF THE BREACH

- Identity theft/fraud was the leading affect of data breaches in 2024.
- A decreased proportion of respondents indicated that they needed to replace identity documents or change passwords of their online accounts.
- Those who did have financial information involved were more likely this reporting period to have experienced monetary loss.



Q36. How were you affected by the data breach?

Base: All respondents who were affected by a data breach which occurred at a government agency (2022 n=51\*, 2024 n=22\*)

\*Please note, due to the small base size this data may not be representative of NSW residents who have experienced government data breaches

Please note: Significance testing was not performed on this data due to the significant difference in the base size from the previous reporting period



# DEMOGRAPHICS



# GENDER AND AGE



%	2014 (n=340)	2016 (n=340)	2018 (n=803)	2020 (n=802)	2022 (n=800)	2024 (n=809)
<b>Gender</b>						
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
<b>Age</b>						
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)
<b>Working status</b>						
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 Government Assistance

- An increasing number of respondents (almost 9 in 10) agreed that Government should provide assistance when data is breached.



## Incidence of Data Breaches

- Almost one third of respondents had been affected by a data breach, which is almost double the proportion of respondents in 2022.



## Incidence of Government Agencies being Breached

- Less than 1 in 10 respondents who had been affected by a breach indicated that the breach occurred at a NSW Government agency, which is a significant decrease from almost 4 in 10 respondents in 2022.



## Type of Government Organisations

- Whilst there were less breaches overall from NSW government organisations, respondents' data continued to be most commonly breached at NSW Government agencies / departments.



## Timing of Breach Notification

- Respondents were typically notified of the breach within a shorter time frame this reporting period, with almost 7 in 10 respondents being notified of the breach within 6 months of its occurrence.



## Assistance Offered by Agency

- Almost one quarter of respondents did not feel that the government agency where the breach occurred offered them advice or assistance, which is a noticeable increase from 2022. The proportion of respondents who were informed of the breach by the agency decreased from almost three fifths in 2022 to around one fifth.



## Information Involved in Breaches

- More respondents this reporting period who had experienced a Government agency breach indicated that no financial or identity information was involved, however, almost half indicated that their email and / or phone number was shared.



## Affect of Breaches

- Identity theft / fraud continues to be a leading affect of breaches, however, there was a decrease in respondents who needed to replace identity documents and / or change passwords of their online accounts. Those who did have financial information involved were more likely this reporting period to have experienced monetary loss.





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