



INFORMATION ACCESS - COMMUNITY STUDY REPORT

CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON REPORT › OCT 2025

fiftyfive5

Part of **Accenture** Song



CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY
2. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES TO ACCESSING GOVERNMENT INFORMATION
3. EXPERIENCES OF ACCESSING GOVERNMENT-HELD INFORMATION
4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

SECTION 1

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY



The **main objective** of the study is to explore public awareness and experiences of information access rights among the general public, and to inform strategic decisions that promote positive engagement with the relevant jurisdictions and agencies.

2025 marks the first wave of the survey managed by Fiftyfive5, following many years under Woolcott Research.

With this transition, the study has undergone some changes, meaning that results are not always directly comparable with previous years.

Key changes include:

- **Methodology:** transition from CATI to online surveys
- **Sample sizes:** significantly increased to improve robustness
- **Questionnaire alignment:** consistent wording and answer options across jurisdictions, where relevant and possible
- **Question and code frames:** revised to ensure clarity, ease of response, and suitability for online completion

Six individual surveys were conducted — one for each jurisdiction. While each survey was run separately, the alignment of questionnaires allows for comparisons across most questions between jurisdictions.

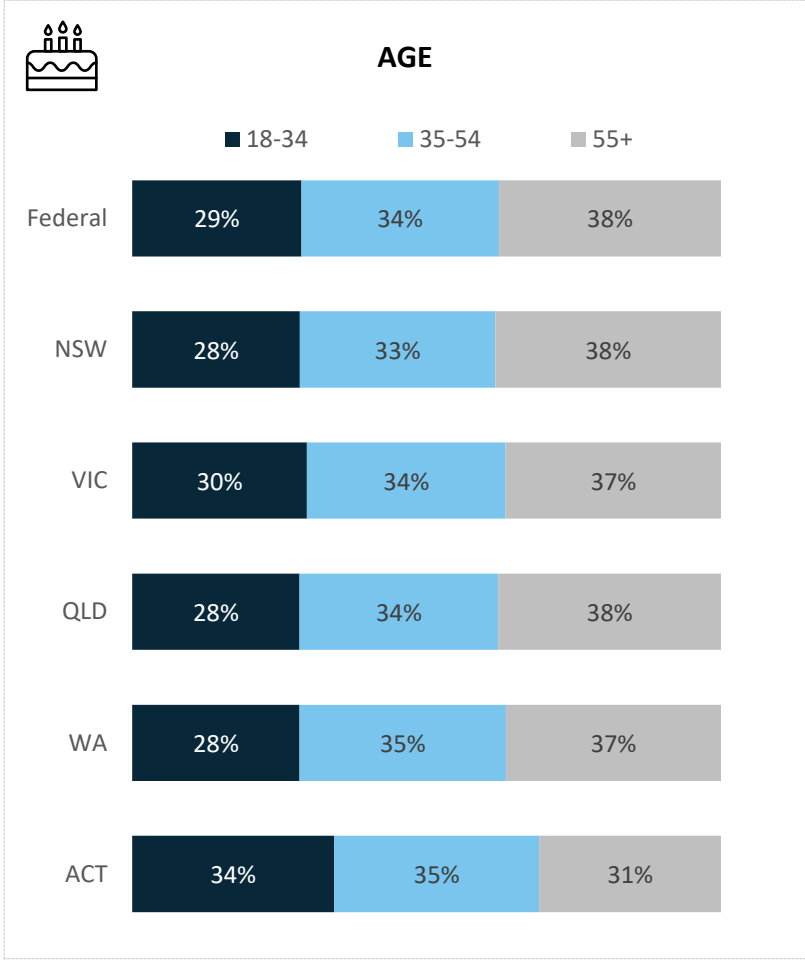
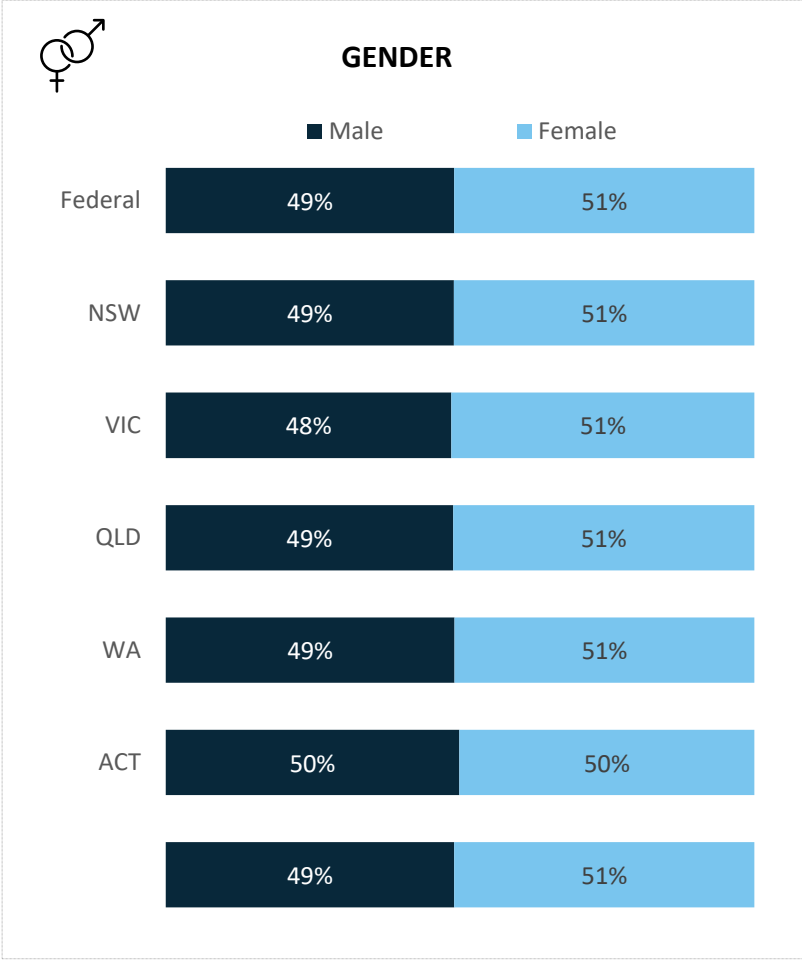
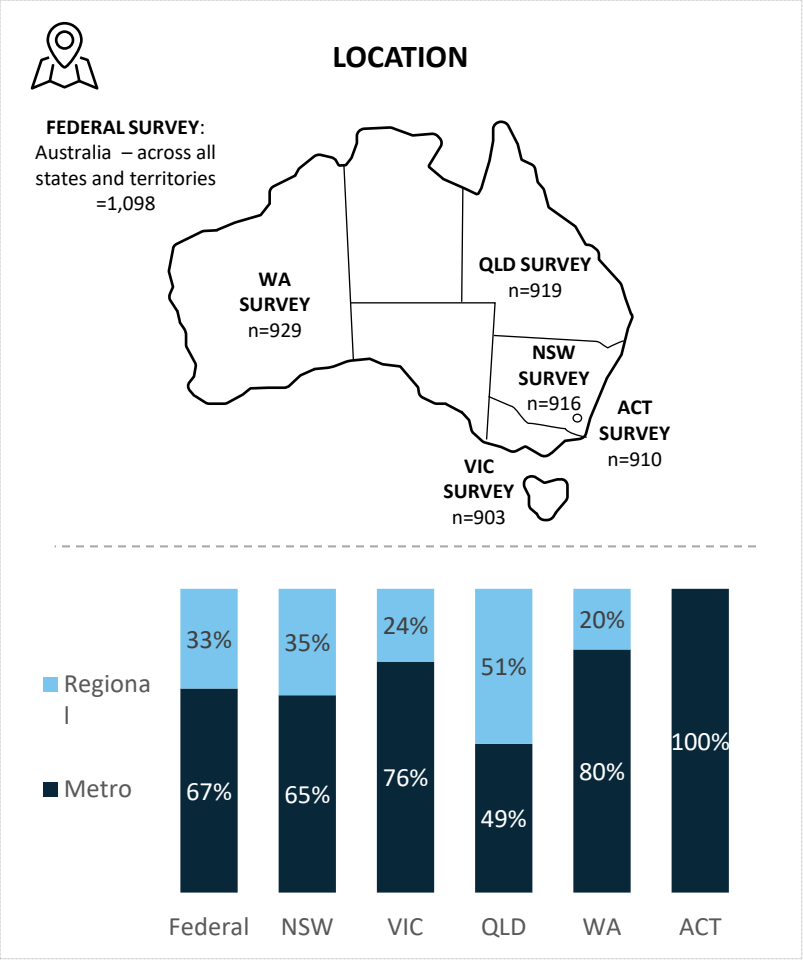
Each survey was conducted online and took **approx. 5-10 minutes**, depending on awareness and previous experiences.

For each jurisdiction, we **targeted a representative sample** by age, gender, and metro vs regional proportions. For the Federal survey state/ territory proportions were also considered.

Following fieldwork, each jurisdiction’s **results were weighted** proportionately to their own population data to ensure representativeness of the findings within each jurisdiction.

Jurisdictions	Final sample, n=
Federal	1,098
NSW	916
VIC	903
QLD	919
WA	929
ACT	910

WE CONDUCTED SIX SEPARATE SURVEYS — ONE FOR EACH JURISDICTION PARTICIPATING IN THE 2025 STUDY. EACH JURISDICTION’S SAMPLE IS REPRESENTATIVE OF ITS POPULATION BY AGE, GENDER, AND METRO VS REGIONAL LOCATION, WITH THE FEDERAL SURVEY ALSO REPRESENTATIVE BY STATE AND TERRITORY

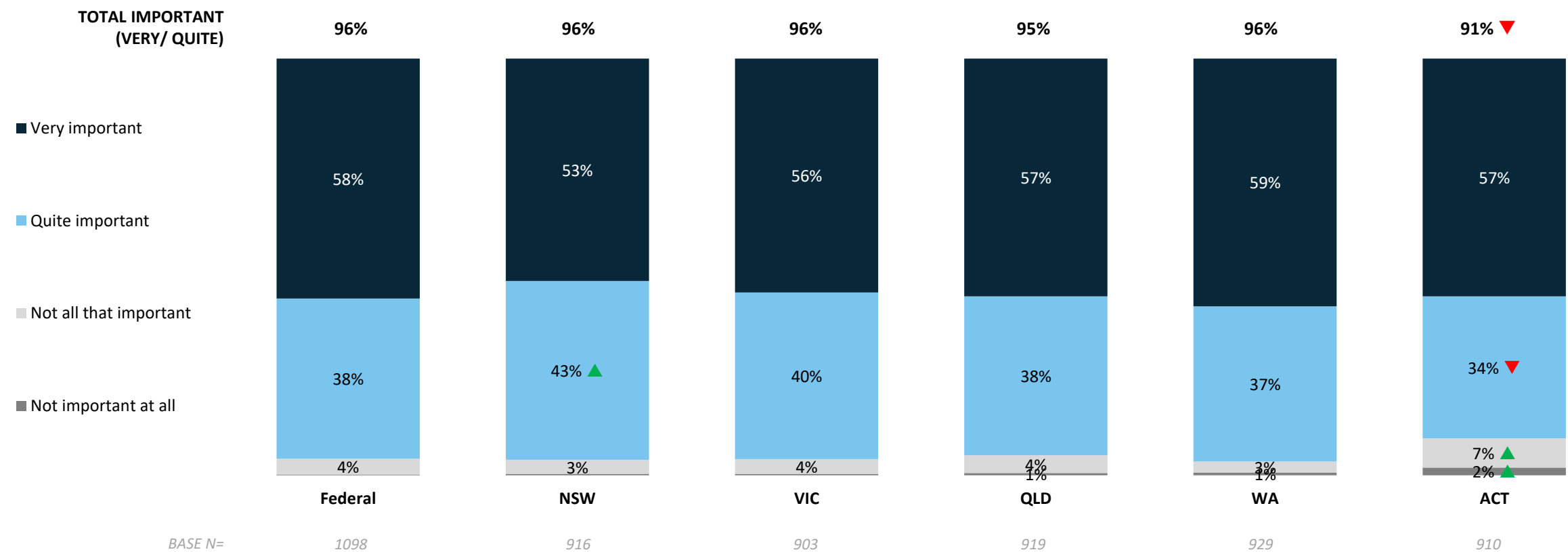


SECTION 2

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES TO ACCESSING GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

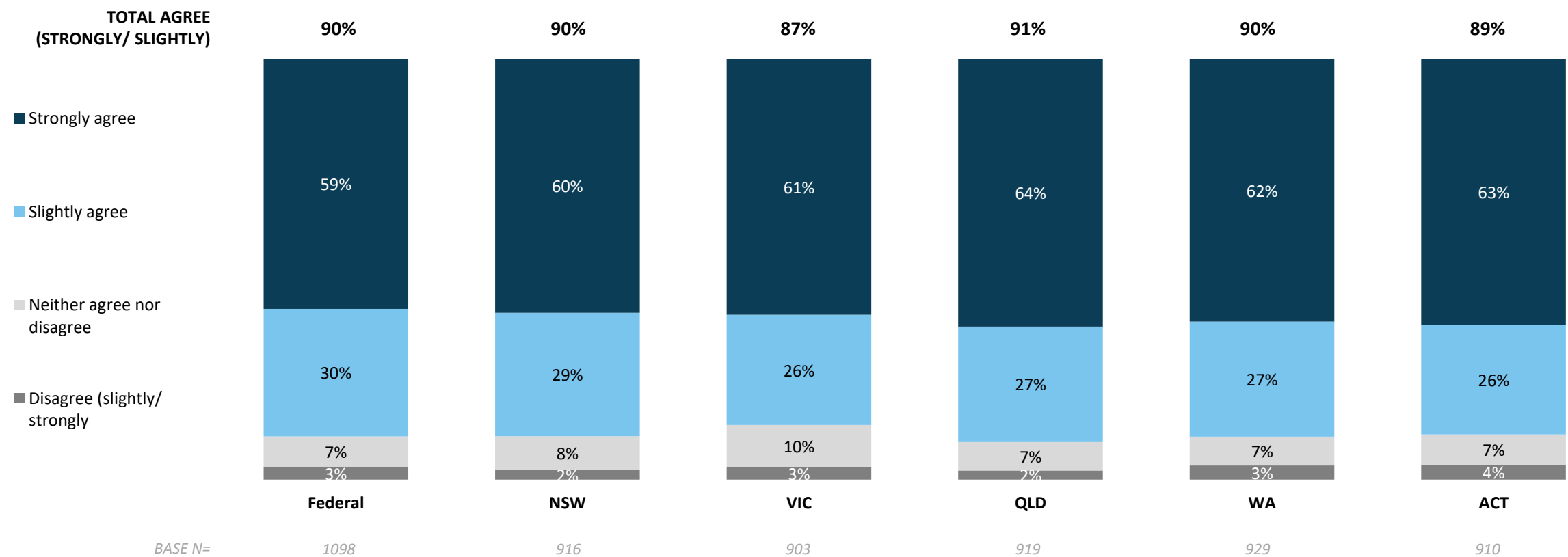
THE MAJORITY ACROSS ALL JURISDICTIONS PERCEIVE THE RIGHT TO ACCESS GOVERNMENT-HELD INFORMATION AS IMPORTANT, WITH OVER HALF RATING IT AS VERY IMPORTANT. WHILE THE IMPORTANCE IS RATED VERY STRONGLY IN THE ACT (91%), IT IS SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER THAN IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

How important do you believe it is to have the right to access any government-held information?



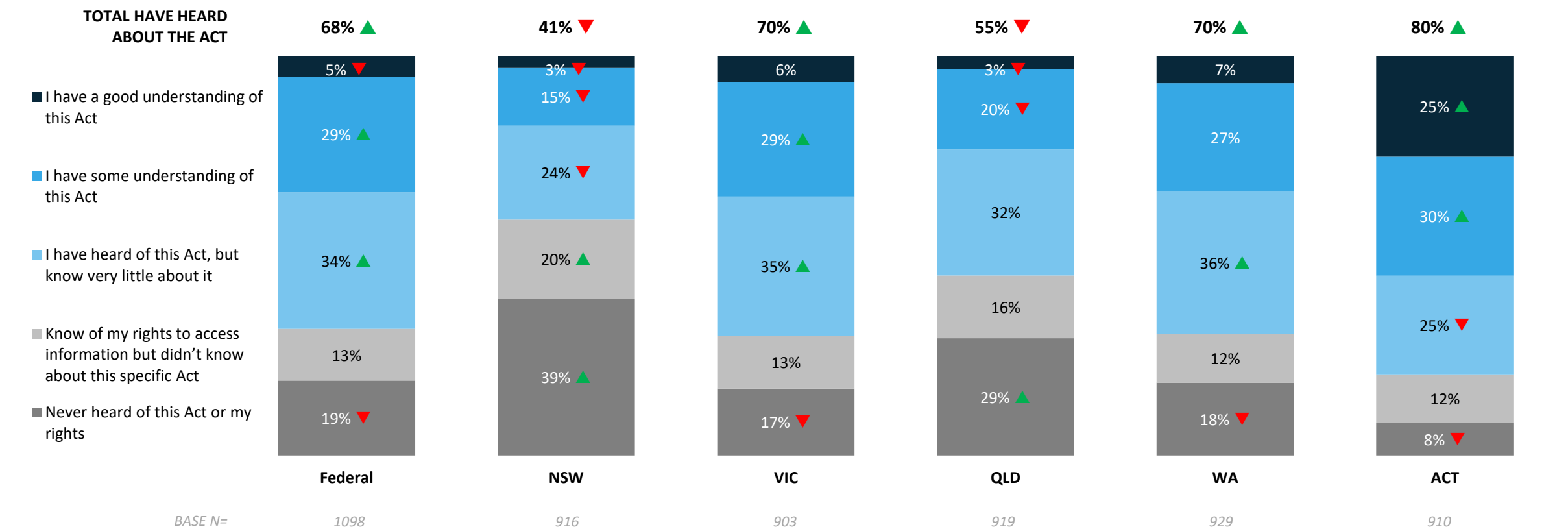
WITH NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES ACROSS JURISDICTIONS, AROUND 9 IN 10 AGREE THAT ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION IMPROVES TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY, INCLUDING AROUND 60% AGREEING STRONGLY

To what extent do you agree or disagree that public access to government information improves government transparency and accountability?



WHILE AGREEMENT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RIGHT TO ACCESS GOVERNMENT-HELD INFORMATION IS HIGH ACROSS ALL JURISDICTIONS, FAMILIARITY WITH THE RELEVANT LEGISLATION VARIES SIGNIFICANTLY. THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING ARE IN THE ACT, WHILE NSW AND QLD NEED THE MOST IMPROVEMENT

Are you aware that the [relevant legislation] gives the public the right to access information held by the [Jurisdiction] Government agencies?



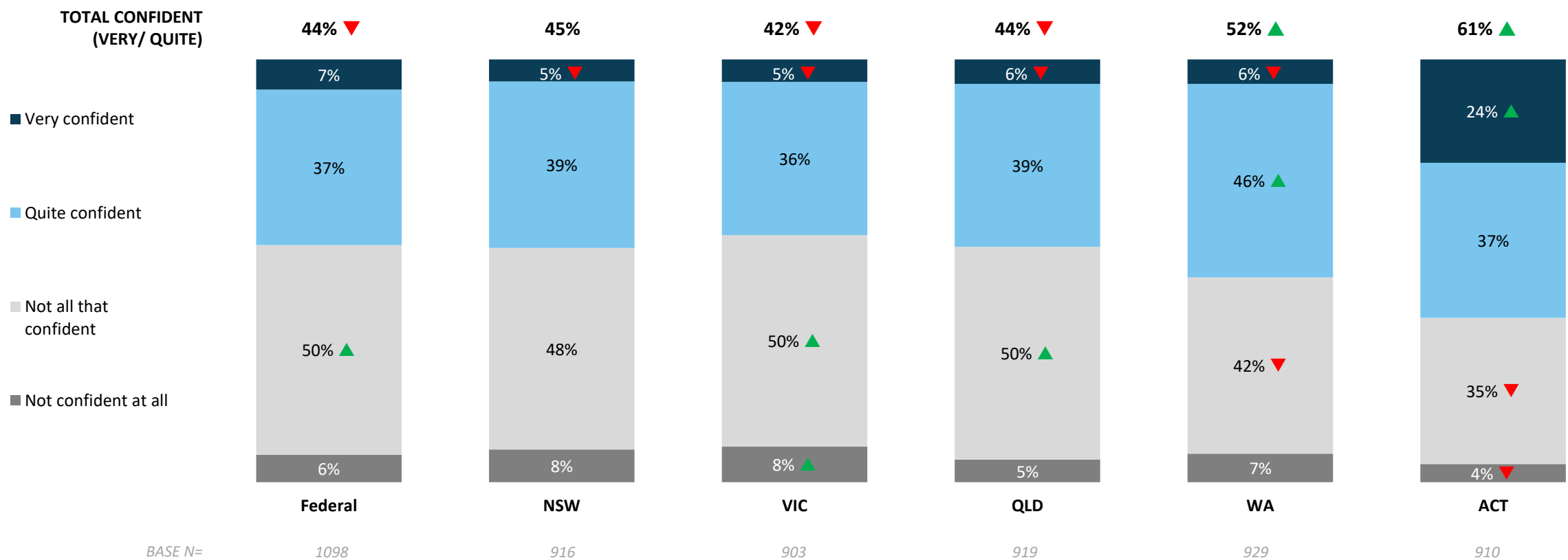
IN LINE WITH FAMILIARITY WITH THE RELEVANT ACT IN EACH JURISDICTION, THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ORGANISATIONS INCLUDED ARE IN THE ACT, FOLLOWED BY VIC. THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OTHER JURISDICTIONS TO BETTER COMMUNICATE THEIR RESIDENTS' RIGHTS

From which of the following organisations are you aware that you have the right to access information under the [relevant legislation]?

	Federal	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	ACT
Australian (Federal) government departments/agencies (e.g. Centrelink, Home Affairs)	56%					
Federal statutory bodies such as ACCC and ASIC	34%					
Australian (Federal) Government – your personal information	54%					
Australian (Federal) Government – policy and procedural documents	38%					
Federal: Australian (Federal) Government Ministers/ NSW/ QLD/ WA/ ACT: Ministers	21%	20%		24%	25%	30%
VIC /QLD / WA/ ACT: State government agencies/ NSW: including public hospitals		56%	69%	59%	61%	82%
Local government/ councils		47%	55%	49%	51%	
WA/ QLD: Public hospitals and health services/ VIC: Public hospitals			37%	45%	46%	
NSW/ QLD/ WA: Public universities/ VIC: TAFEs and universities		22%	29%	26%	29%	
NSW state-owned corporations		28%				
Government schools (through the Department of Education and Training)				35%		
None of the above	23%	29%	18%	23%	22%	15%
BASE N=	1098	916	903	919	929	910

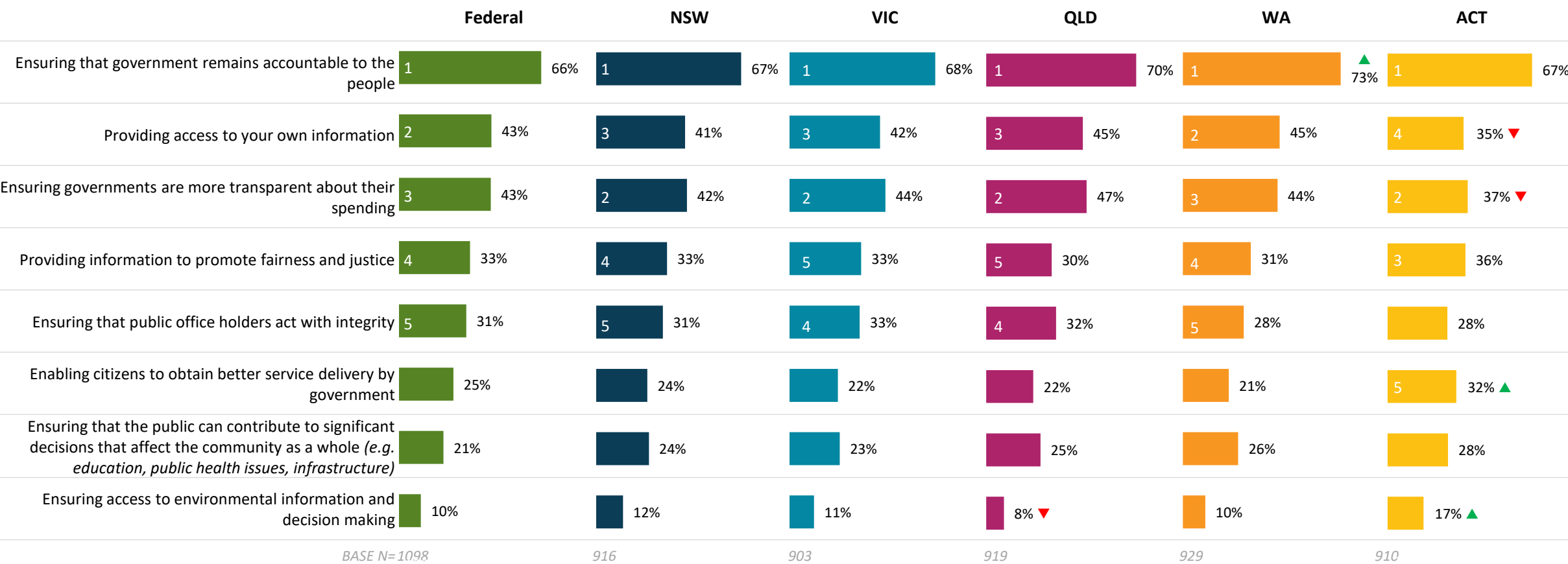
ACT RESIDENTS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE CONFIDENT THAN THOSE IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT WILL ALLOW THEM ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE, WITH 1 IN 4 BEING VERY CONFIDENT

How confident are you that [relevant act] will allow you access to information about how decisions are made by the [Jurisdiction] Government and its agencies?



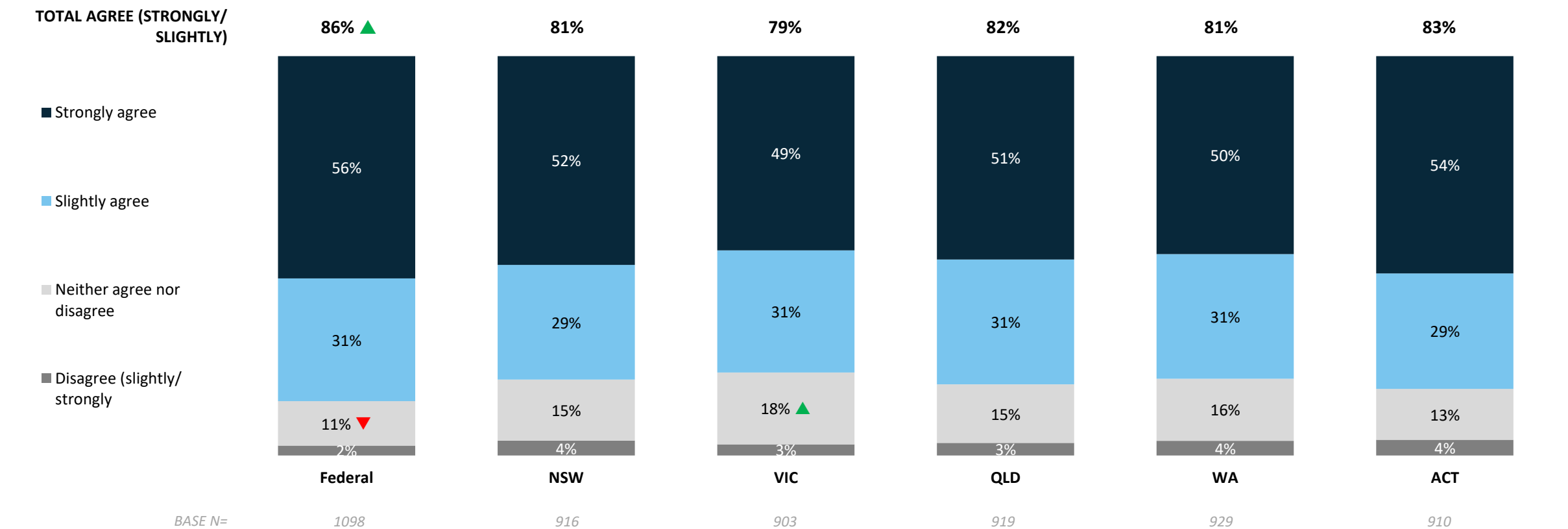
ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION ARE KEY CONSIDERATIONS THAT PEOPLE ACROSS ALL JURISDICTIONS BELIEVE GOVERNMENTS SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHEN DECIDING WHETHER TO RELEASE INFORMATION

What main public interest factors do you think the [Jurisdiction] Government and its agencies should take into account when deciding whether to release information?



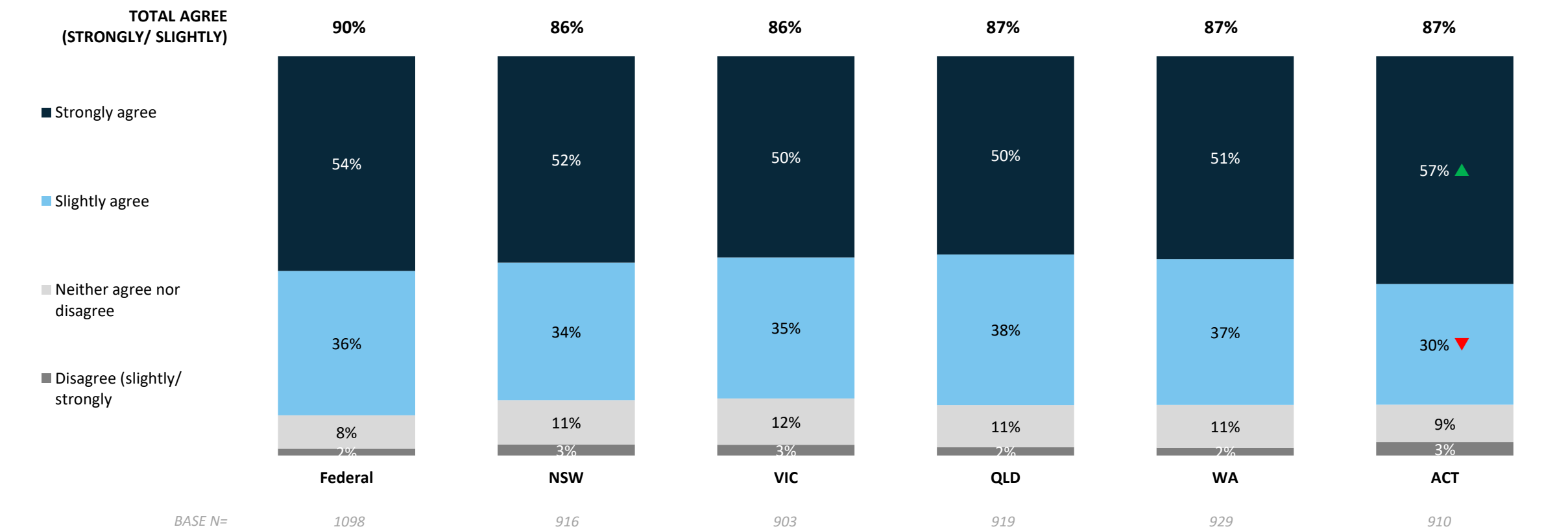
THE MAJORITY – OVER 3 IN 4 ACROSS ALL JURISDICTIONS – AGREE THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST PUBLICLY REPORT ON ANY TECHNOLOGY USED TO INFORM DECISION-MAKING, WITH THE HIGHEST AGREEMENT FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

To what extent do you agree that the [Jurisdiction] Government and its agencies must publicly report on any technology used (including AI and automated decision-making) to inform agency decisions that impact individuals?



THE MAJORITY, AROUND 9 IN 10 IN EACH JURISDICTION, AGREE THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS AGENCIES SHOULD PUBLICLY REPORT ON THE INFORMATION THEY MAINTAIN

To what extent do you agree that the [Jurisdiction] Government and its agencies should publicly report on the information they maintain (such as data and datasets, policy documents and decision-making records, spending and budgeting documents etc.)?



SECTION 3

EXPERIENCES OF ACCESSING GOVERNMENT-HELD INFORMATION

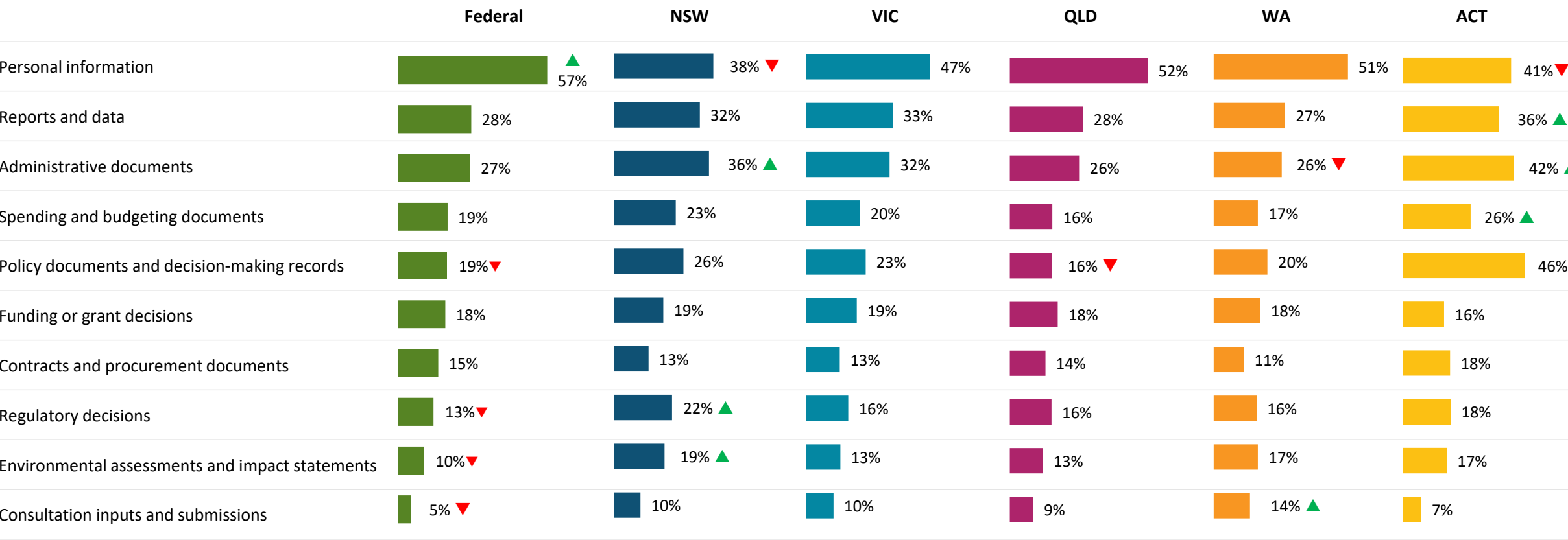
ATTEMPTS TO ACCESS INFORMATION FROM A GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION IS HIGHEST IN THE ACT, WHILE LOWEST LEVELS OF REQUESTS IN QLD AND NSW

Over the past three years, which of the following Federal Government agencies (if any) have you tried to access information from?

	Federal	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	ACT
Australian (Federal) government departments/agencies (e.g. Centrelink, Home Affairs)	24%					
Federal statutory bodies such as ACCC and ASIC	10%					
Australian (Federal) Government – your personal information	16%					
Australian (Federal) Government – policy and procedural documents	8%					
Federal: Australian (Federal) Government Ministers/ NSW/ QLD/ WA/ ACT: Ministers	3%	4%		3%	3%	8%
VIC /QLD / WA/ ACT: State government agencies/ NSW: including public hospitals		19%	17%	15%	13%	41%
Local government/ councils		19%	17%	14%	18%	
WA/ QLD: Public hospitals and health services/ VIC: Public hospitals**			12%	16%	20%	
NSW/ QLD/ WA: Public universities/ VIC: TAFEs and universities		8%	8%	4%	7%	
NSW state-owned corporations		5%				
Government schools (through the Department of Education and Training)			7%			
None of the above	60%	65%	64%	65% ▲	62%	55% ▼
BASE N=	1098	916	903	919	929	910

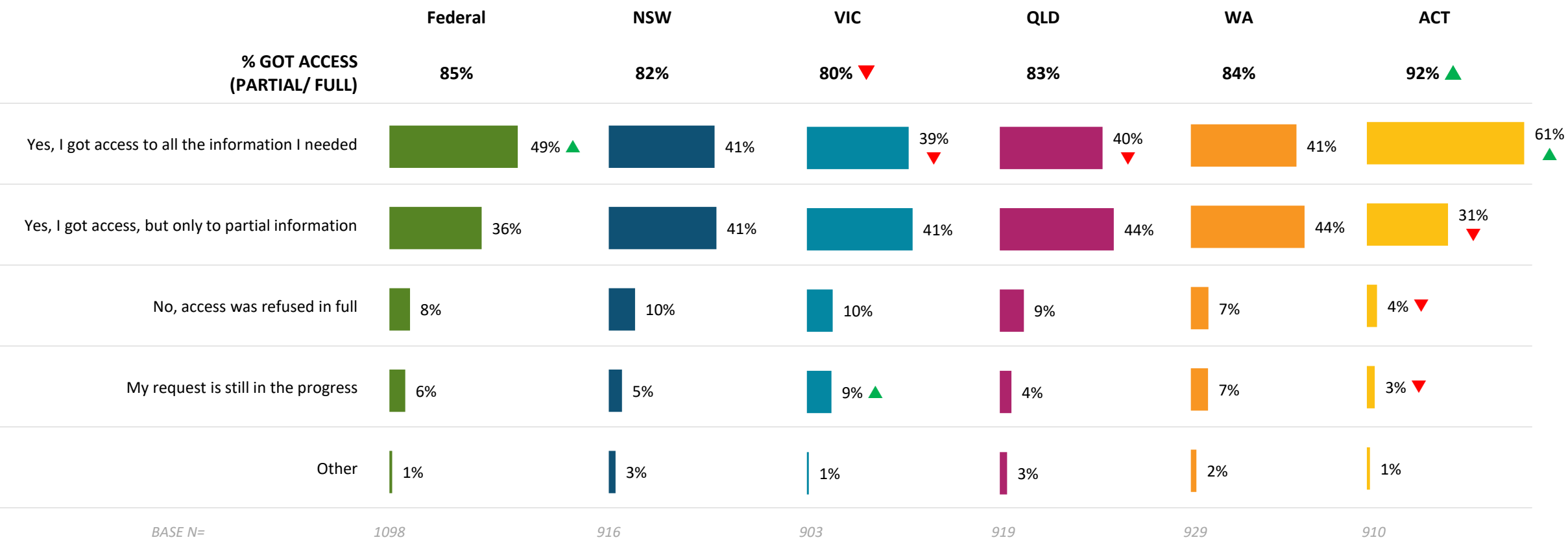
PERSONAL INFORMATION, REPORTS AND DATA, AND ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS ARE AMONG THE MOST ACCESSED DOCUMENTS IN ALL JURISDICTIONS. ALTHOUGH LOWER ON THE LIST FOR OTHER JURISDICTIONS, IN THE ACT, POLICY DOCUMENTS AND DECISION-MAKING RECORDS ARE THE MOST REQUESTED

What types of information were you trying to access from the following government agencies?



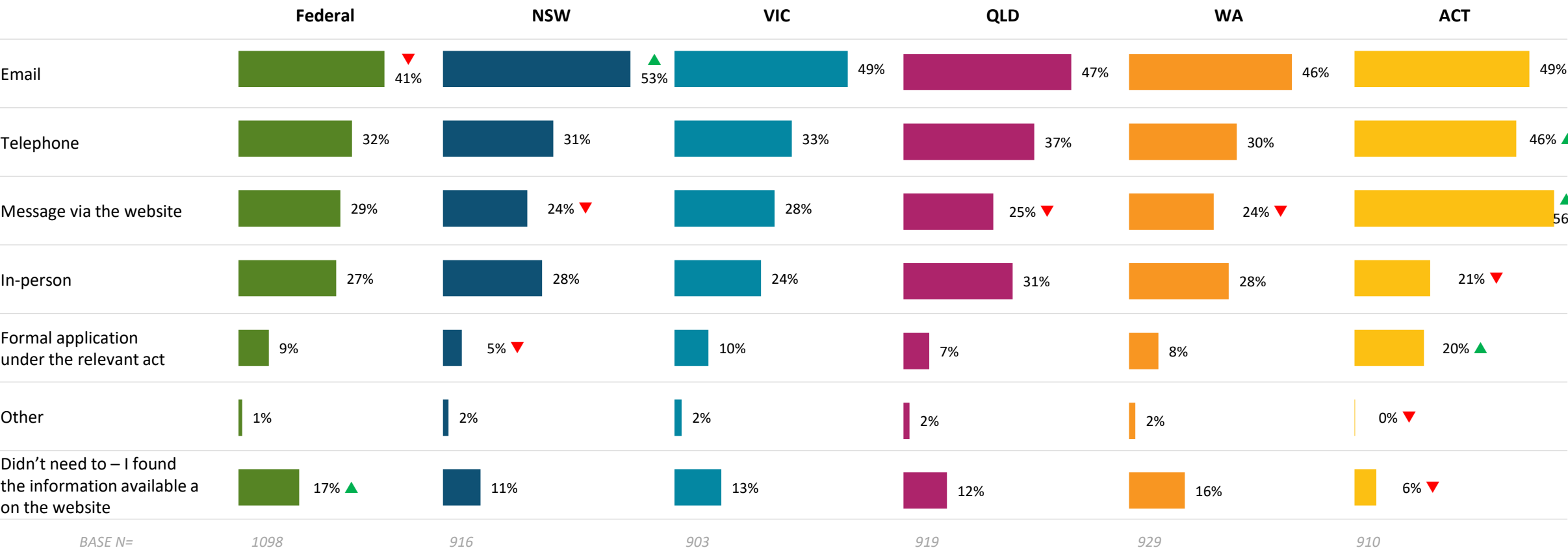
THE MAJORITY – 80% OR MORE – RECEIVED AT LEAST PARTIAL ACCESS ACROSS ALL JURISDICTIONS, WITH THE ACT GOVERNMENT BEING THE MOST LIKELY TO PROVIDE FULL ACCESS, FOLLOWED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE ALL OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Did you access the information successfully from the following government agencies?



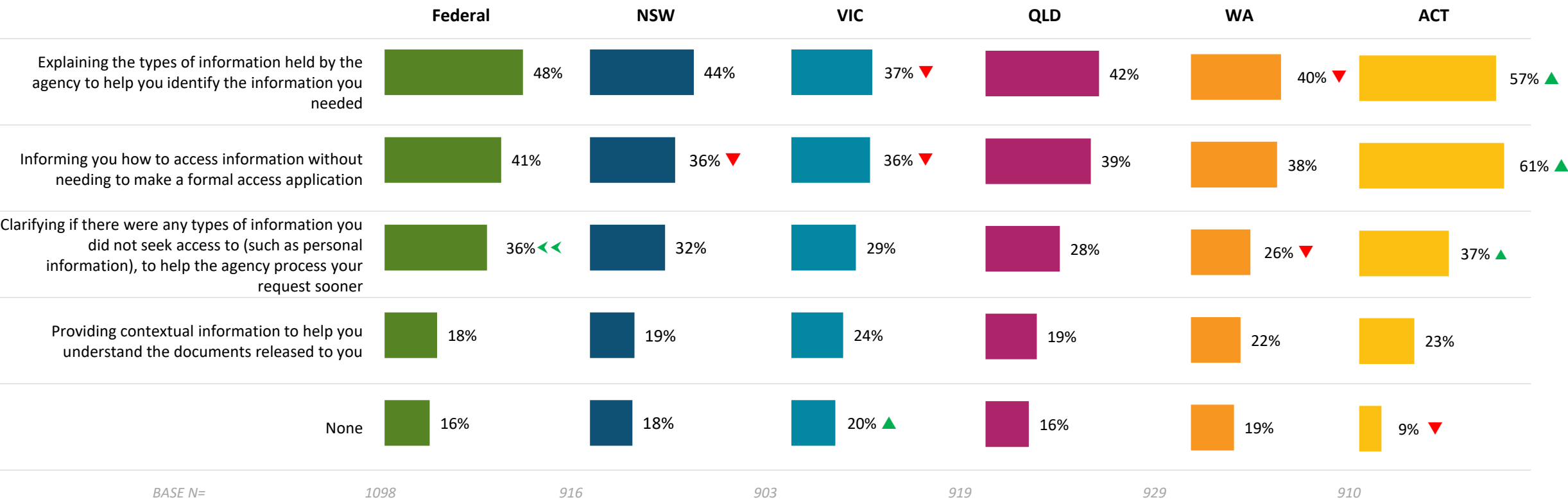
EMAIL IS THE PRIMARY CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION – ALTHOUGH IN THE ACT MESSAGING VIA THE WEBSITE IS MORE COMMON. NOTABLE TO MENTION THAT TELEPHONE AND IN-PERSON ENQUIRIES REMAIN SIGNIFICANT

What channels did you use when communicating with the following government agencies?



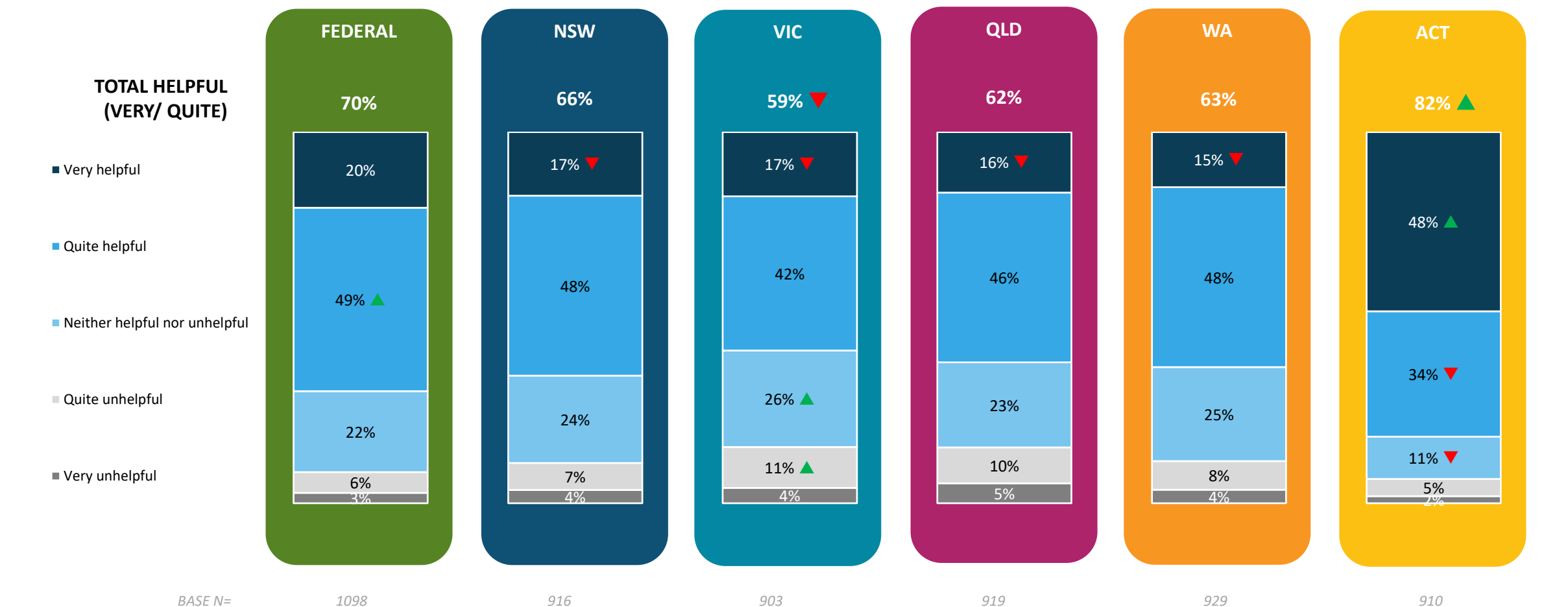
THOSE CONTACTING ACT GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS ARE BY FAR THE MOST LIKELY TO REPORT ANY ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE RECEIVED

What types of advice and assistance did you receive from the following government agencies?



IN LINE WITH THE ADVICE AND SUPPORT RECEIVED, THOSE CONTACTING ACT GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS ARE THE MOST LIKELY TO RATE THEM AS VERY HELPFUL

How helpful were they in providing advice and assistance to you when you tried to access information from the following government agencies?



REQUESTS FOR *PERSONAL INFORMATION* ARE THE MOST COMMON ACROSS ALL JURISDICTIONS, ALTHOUGH WITH SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES. REQUESTS TO THE ACT GOVERNMENT ARE EXPECTED TO BE THE MOST LIKELY OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS

How likely are you to request the following types of [jurisdiction] government information over the next 2 years?

% LIKELY/ VERY LIKELY TO REQUEST THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION	Federal	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	ACT
Personal information <i>(e.g. information the government holds about you, such as contact details, Centrelink records, tax history, etc. / contact details, license details, health records, police records, education records, etc.)</i>	56%	54%	51% ▼	58%	55%	64% ▲
Spending and budgeting documents <i>(e.g. how government funds are allocated and used)</i>	27% ▼	31%	29% ▼	29%	32%	45% ▲
Regulatory decisions <i>(e.g. local government development applications, licensing approvals, compliance reports)</i>	24% ▼	27%	26%	25% ▼	27%	43% ▲
Funding or grant decisions <i>(e.g. assessment criteria, reasons for approval or rejection)</i>	23% ▼	28%	25%	24% ▼	27%	40% ▲
Environmental assessments and impact statements <i>(e.g. linked to infrastructure or development projects)</i>	22% ▼	26%	24% ▼	24% ▼	27%	43% ▲
Reports and data <i>(e.g. research reports, statistics, performance monitoring documents)</i>	22% ▼	28%	27%	26% ▼	27%	49% ▲
Administrative documents <i>(e.g. internal procedures, guidelines, manuals, organisational charts)</i>	21%	20% ▼	19% ▼	18% ▼	20% ▼	40% ▲
Consultation inputs and submissions <i>(e.g. public feedback from surveys or policy consultations)</i>	20% ▼	24%	23% ▼	24%	25%	43% ▲
Contracts and procurement documents <i>(e.g. service agreements, tender evaluations)</i>	19% ▼	21%	22%	18% ▼	19% ▼	38% ▲
Policy documents and decision-making records <i>(e.g. policies, briefing notes, meeting minutes, Cabinet submissions)</i>	17% ▼	19%	16% ▼	17% ▼	20%	38% ▲
BASE N=	1098	916	903	919	929	910

ONLINE PORTALS AND EMAILS ARE THE MOST PREFERRED WAYS OF REQUESTING INFORMATION IN FUTURE

What would be your preferred way to request access to the information from the relevant Federal Government agency?

	Federal	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	ACT
Online portal/ form	31%	26% ▼	30%	34%	32%	31%
Email	30% ▼	40% ▲	35%	36%	36%	29% ▼
Message via the website	11%	10%	8%	8%	8%	15% ▲
Formal application under the relevant act	9%	7%	7%	6%	5%	9%
Telephone	9%	7%	9%	7%	6%	7%
In-person	8%	8%	9%	8%	11%	7%
Mail	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
BASE N=	1041	884	862	891	887	879

SECTION 4

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS



The **importance of access to government-held information is widely recognised** across all jurisdictions, with strong agreement that access to government information improves transparency and accountability.

There is also **strong support** across all jurisdictions for governments to publicly **report on technology used** in decision-making and the **information they maintain**.



Attempts to access information are highest in the ACT and lowest in QLD, with **personal information, reports, data, and administrative documents** being the most accessed documents across all jurisdictions, although in the ACT, policy documents and decision-making records are the most requested.

The majority across all jurisdictions received **at least partial access to the information they requested**, with the ACT Government being the most likely to provide full access. Those contacting ACT Government organisations are the most likely to report receiving advice and assistance and rate them as very helpful.



Familiarity with relevant legislation varies, with the ACT having the highest levels of understanding of the relevant act. Confidence in getting access to government information is also highest in the ACT.

Other jurisdictions, particularly **NSW and QLD**, have **opportunities to boost awareness and understanding** of the relevant act and access to information rights, including which organisations are included in the legislation. Higher awareness and understanding of the act should increase confidence in the ability to getting access to information about how decisions are made.



Email is the primary communication channel for these requests, although in the ACT, **messaging via the website** is more common. For future requests, there is a strong preference for an **online portal** apart from emails.



fiftyfive5

Part of **Accenture** Song

Singapore

Raffles City Tower,
250 North Bridge Road
Singapore 179101

New Zealand

Level 12, 125 Queen Street,
Auckland 1010

Canberra

65 Canberra Avenue,
Griffith ACT 2603

Melbourne

Level 5, 161 Collins Street
VIC 3000

Sydney

International House,
Level 5, 3 Sussex St
Barangaroo NSW 2000

www.fiftyfive5.com