



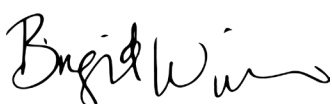
Focus on Tasmania: State of the Older Nation 2023

From a nationally representative survey
commissioned by the Federation of Councils
on the Ageing

This Focus on Tasmania – State of the Older Nation 2023 report is drawn from the COTA Federation State of the Older Nation Report by SEC Newgate Research, released in April 2023.

We recognise the issues associated with conducting a survey online when older Tasmanians are among the most digitally excluded groups in the country. Notwithstanding this fact, the report provides valuable contemporary insights about the experience of older Tasmanians and provides a useful comparison with the findings of previous reports and other consultations. It is concerning to note that report tells the story of a cohort who aren't feeling as good about the future as they used to.

The findings of the report will inform COTA Tasmania's ongoing advocacy and action and underpin policy debates now and into the future.



Brigid Wilkinson

Acting CEO
COTA Tasmania

This project was conducted in accordance with ISO20252:2019 guidelines, to which SEC Newgate Research is accredited

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Download the full report at www.stateoftheoldernation.org.au. Please note the full report includes additional information on the topics discussed here and also covers a range of additional topics such as Intentions to Travel, Health Services, Age-based Discrimination, Elder Abuse, Housing, Technology and COVID-19, as well as more details on the methodology, sample and weighting.

Disclaimer

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▲ Throughout the report, arrows denote results which are significantly higher
▼ or lower than the previous wave at the 95% confidence level.



Purpose and methodology

This research was commissioned by the Federation of nine Councils on the Ageing (COTA) across Australia – including all eight COTA state and territory organisations and COTA Australia – in order to understand the views, life experiences and needs of Australians aged 50+.

SEC Newgate Research conducted a nationally representative online survey lasting 20 minutes on average, with a robust sample of 2,750 Australians aged 50 and over. Quotas were set for state and territory, metropolitan and regional areas, and gender and age.

This is the third wave of research conducted for the State of the Older Nation study, first launched in 2018. This tracking research seeks to monitor trends over time, and the impact of any changes made to improve the lives of older Australians. In each wave, we also include deep dives into particular topical areas – this year we explored housing, intention to travel and likelihood to join or re-enter the workforce.

The survey was conducted between 8th November and 13th December 2022. Although participants were surveyed in late 2022, this report has been released in 2023 and will be referred to as such throughout this document. Participants were drawn from an opt-in online research panel.

The findings presented within this summary report focus on older Australians living in Tasmania, with a sample size of $n=214$. This sample size results in a margin of error of $\pm 6.7\%$ at the 95% confidence level. The data set was weighted using population data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Census 2021 for age, gender, state, and location (Capital/Noncapital cities). The weighting structure is shown in the Appendix of the full report, which can be found at www.stateoftheoldernation.org.au. All results presented throughout this report are weighted unless otherwise specified.

Report at a glance

Quality of life

P. 06



65%

feel younger than their age. On average, they felt **7.5 years younger** than their actual age.



70%

rate their quality of life highly (7 or more out of 10) but **12%** say their quality of life is poor (rating 0 to 4).

Sentiment about the future

P. 08



59%

feel positive about what the future holds for them personally in the next year or two, slightly lower than 2021 (**62%**).



54%

say things are getting worse for their generation (significantly higher than 2021 when **36%** felt things were getting worse).



10%

feel things are getting better (significantly lower than **24%** in 2021).

Intentions to travel

P. 09



67%

intend to go on a holiday in the next 12 months, and **81%** of those with an annual personal income of more than \$100k fall into this category[†].



56%

of those who are not intending to take a holiday overseas or interstate feel it is too expensive to do so.

Financial security

P. 10



50%

feel fairly secure about their finances being able to meet their needs throughout the rest of their lives (rating 7 or more out of 10). This is a slight drop from 2021 (**56%** felt secure).



26%

feel financially insecure (rating 0 to 4).



51%

have one or more vulnerability indicators*, in line with **49%** in 2021, and **16%** have overdue bills due to payment difficulties.

*Vulnerability metric is a composite measure of having one or more of the following: a low personal annual income (\$1 - \$30k per capita), a disability, speaking a language other than English, identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, experienced domestic violence, bereavement or homelessness in the past year.

[†]Based on a low sample size (n<30): treat with caution

Employment

P. 12



73%

of those who are fully retired did so before the age of 66, while **38%** of older Tasmanians in employment expect to retire after the age of 66.



33%

of those still working do not think they will ever retire.



8%

of those currently unemployed or not working would definitely consider joining or re-entering the workforce. A further **25%** said maybe and **9%** are unsure.



22%

have experienced employment-related discrimination since turning 50. The proportion of those experiencing it while seeking work is **18%** (was **16%** in 2021).

Health

P. 14



29%

had a high level of difficulty in accessing needed medical services (rating a 7 or more out of 10), significantly higher than **17%** in 2021.



53%

do at least two hours of exercise per week.

Housing

P. 16



17%

rate their ability to adapt their home to make it more accessible as poor (rating a 0 to 4 out of 10). Those aged 70 and over are more likely to be satisfied (7 or more out of 10) with most aspects of their home than those under 70.



86%

rate their access to needed shops at a 7 or more out of 10, **84%** their access to public places, and **79%** their access to friends and family.



18%

almost 1 in 5, are renting, with many vulnerable groups slightly more likely to be renters.

Technology

P. 18



73%

feel comfortable using technology, though this has decreased significantly since 2018 (**83%**).

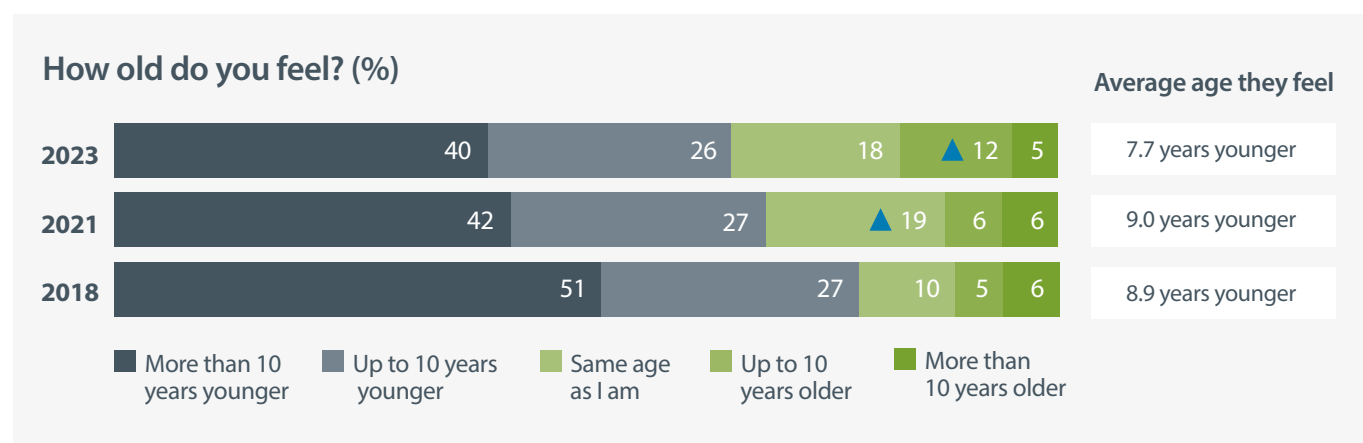


35%

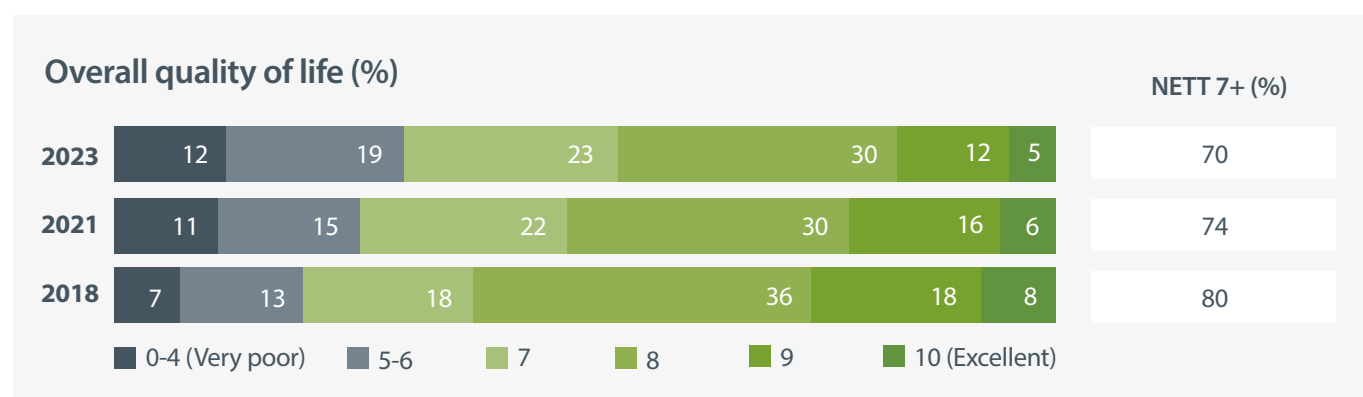
feel they are being left behind in the age of technology, and **43%** want to increase their digital skills.

Quality of life

Most over 50s feel younger than their actual age (65%), but older Tasmanians aren't feeling as young as they did in 2021. Seven in ten (70%) rate their quality of life 'highly', which remains stable.

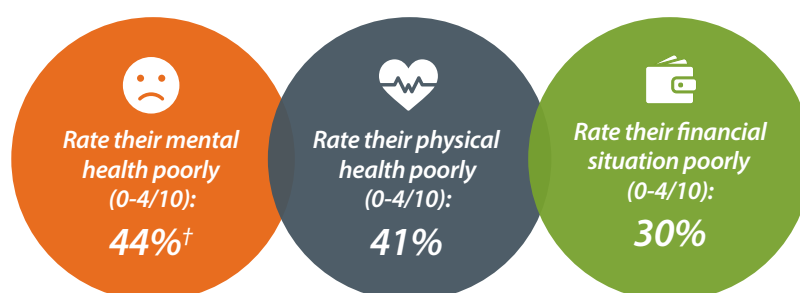


Compared to the 2021 State of the Older Nation study, there has been no great change in the age Tasmanians aged 50 and over feel as compared to their actual age, after a significant negative shift between 2018 and 2021. The majority of older Tasmanians still feel younger than their actual age (65% vs. 69% in 2021), and 17% feel older (12% in 2021).



Nearly three quarters of survey participants (70%) rate their quality of life highly, at 7 or more out of 10 – consistent with 2021 (74%). One in ten (12%) say they have a poor quality of life, giving a low rating of 0 to 4, and this has remained stable since 2021.

Ratings of a poor quality of life (0-4) are more prevalent among those who:

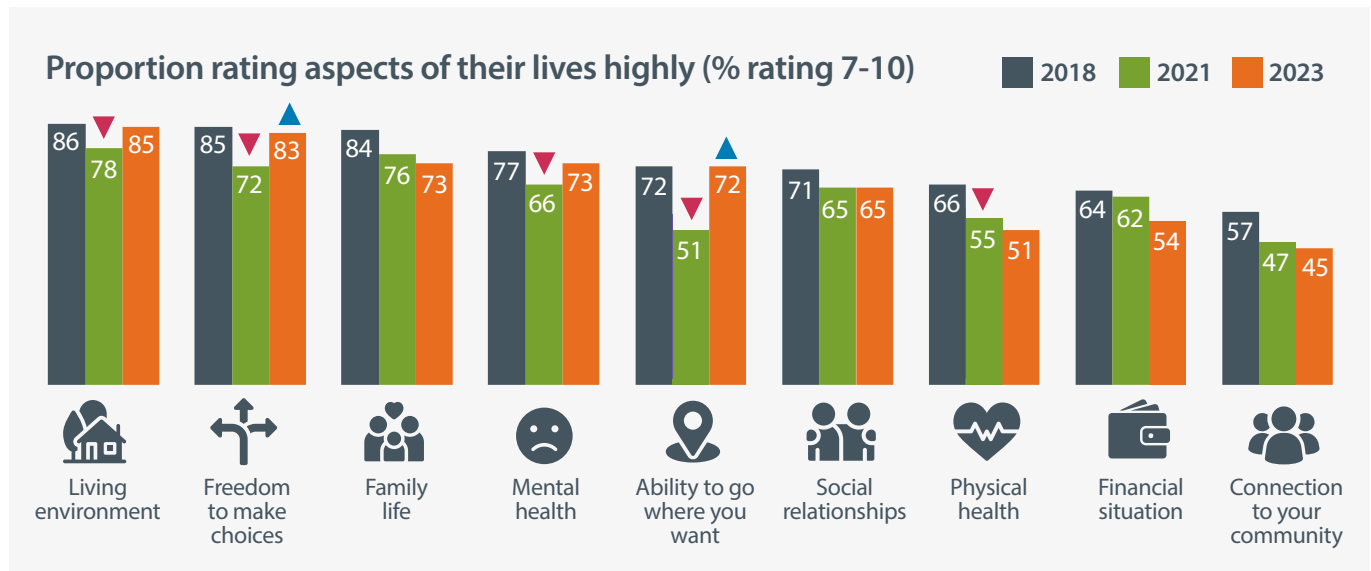


Q3. Some people feel a different age from their actual age based on their date of birth. Please tell us your actual age, and the age you feel
Q6. How would you rate your overall quality of life at the moment? Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2021: n=235, 2018: n=202)

[†]Based on a low sample size (n<30): treat with caution

Quality of life cont.

Older Tasmanians have taken advantage of the relaxing of pandemic related restrictions - significantly more feel that they have the freedom to make choices and go where they want. Despite this, many social, health and financial aspects have not seen marked improvements from last wave.



Consistent with 2021, Tasmanians aged 50 and over feel most positive (giving a rating of 7+/10) about their living environment and freedom to make choices, and least positive about their connection to the local community. While there are increases in ratings for some aspects of life attributable to a post-lockdown environment, this has not translated into significantly improved social, mental, or physical health outcomes, most notably:

- **Physical health:** ratings dropped from 55% in 2021 to 51% in 2023, and are still considerably lower than 66% in 2018;
- **Mental health:** ratings increased from 66% to 73%, but are still lower than 77% in 2018; and
- **Social relationships:** ratings stable at 65%, but are still lower than 71% in 2018.

"Life for me is much better than it was for my parents."

- Male aged 80+ in metro Tasmania

"Because of royal commissions, government and community are focussing more on the wellbeing of the ageing population."

- Female aged 70-79 in metro Tasmania

"Not much changes. Those who are wealthy remain so and those who are poor seem to be slightly worse off."

- Female aged 70-79 in regional Tasmania

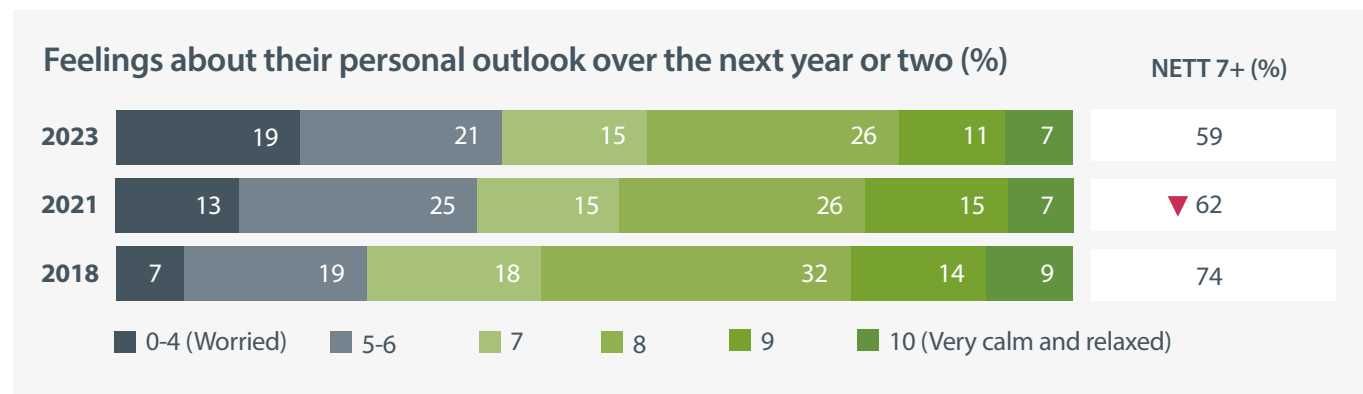
"It is hard to keep up with the cost of living and I am worried about the quality of healthcare and aged care."

- Female aged 60-69 in regional Tasmania

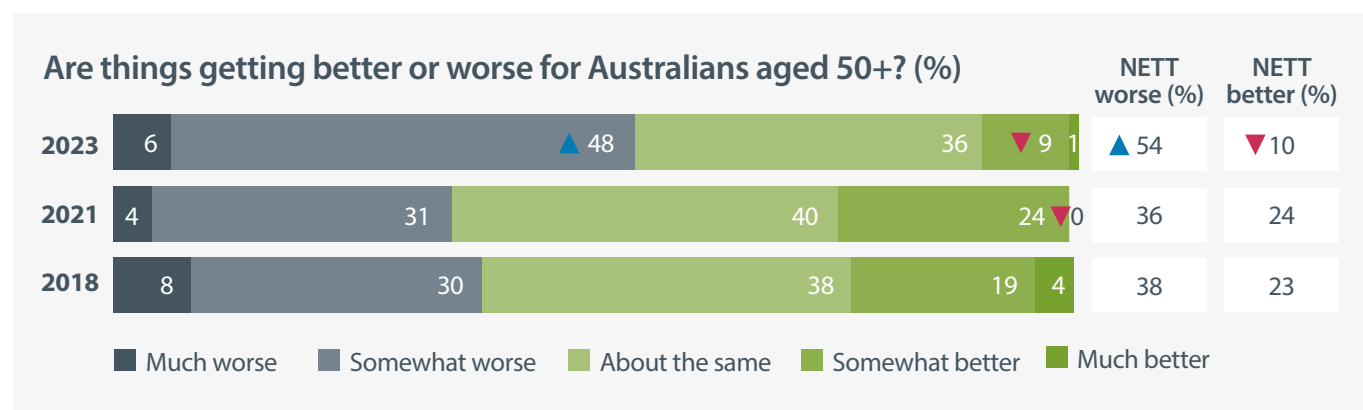
Q11. How would you rate each of the following at this point in your life? Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2021: n=235, 2018: n=202)

Sentiment about the future

Despite declines, more than half of older Tasmanians remain relatively calm about what the next year or two will bring. However, significantly more think that things are getting worse for their generation than in 2021.

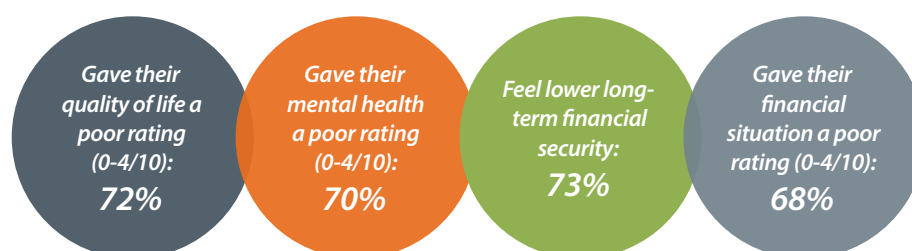


A majority (59%) feel positive about what the future holds in the next year or two, rating 7 or more out of 10, which remains lower than in 2018 (74%). Of concern, almost one in five (19%) feel quite worried with a rating 0 to 4, and this has slightly increased since 2021 (13%) which can be linked to poor mental, physical, and financial health.



Older Tasmanians are far less optimistic about the future compared to 2021, **as more than half (54%) think things are getting worse for Tasmanians aged 50+** – the highest proportion seen since tracking began. **Just 10% feel things are getting better.** These are significant differences from 2021, where a third (36%) felt that things were getting worse, and a considerably higher proportion, 24%, felt as though things were getting better. When asked to explain in their own words why they feel things are getting worse, the rising cost of living is by far the most common reason, as 57% of responses mention this issue (significantly higher than 25% who mentioned this in 2021).

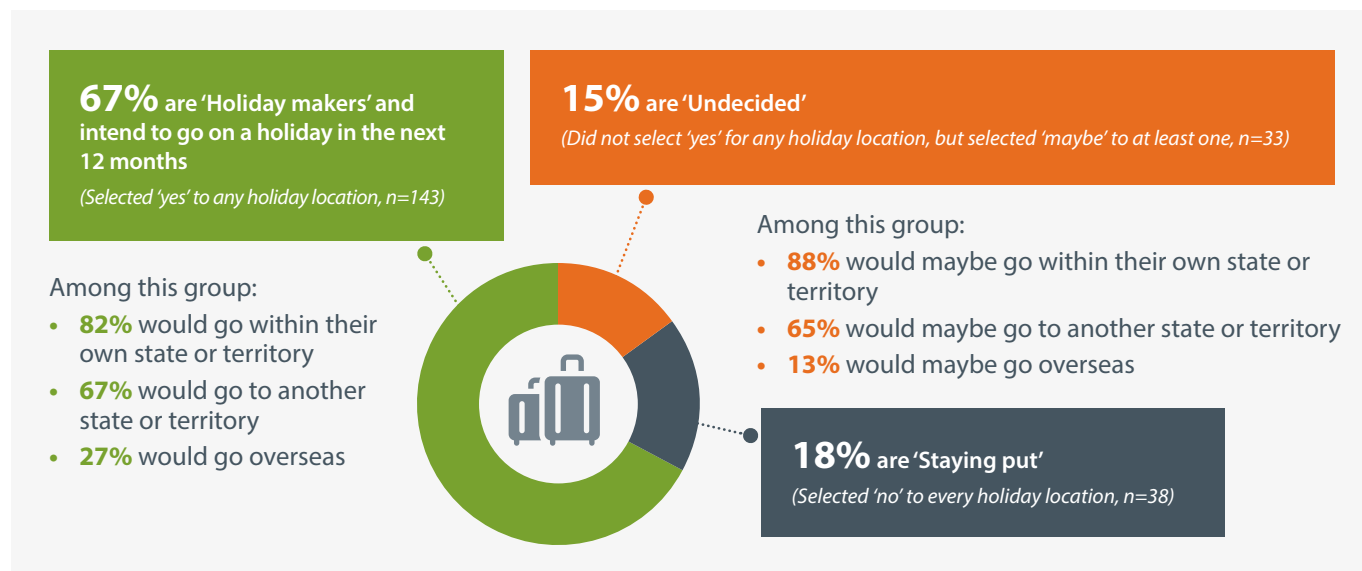
Feelings that things are getting worse for older Tasmanians are more prevalent among those who:



Q9. How are you feeling about what the future holds for you personally over the next year or two? / Q12. Thinking more broadly, do you think things are generally getting better or worse for Australians aged 50+? Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2021: n=235, 2018: n=202)

Intention to travel

Two in three Tasmanians aged 50+ intend to go on a holiday somewhere in the next 12 months but one in five (18%) have no intention to travel.



In a new series of questions exploring older Australians' intention to travel, the survey found that many older Tasmanians want to go on some kind of holiday in the next 12 months (67%).

Of this cohort, most are planning to go on a domestic holiday – either within their own state or territory (82%) or to another state or territory (67%).

Those aged 70 and over are slightly more likely to be 'holiday makers' (71% vs. 65% among those who are younger).

Those who do not intend to take a holiday interstate or overseas (i.e. those 'staying put' or only holidaying in their own state or territory) in the next 12 months cite cost as the main barrier holding them back from travelling, followed by lingering concerns about COVID-19.

Reasons not to holiday overseas or interstate (%)

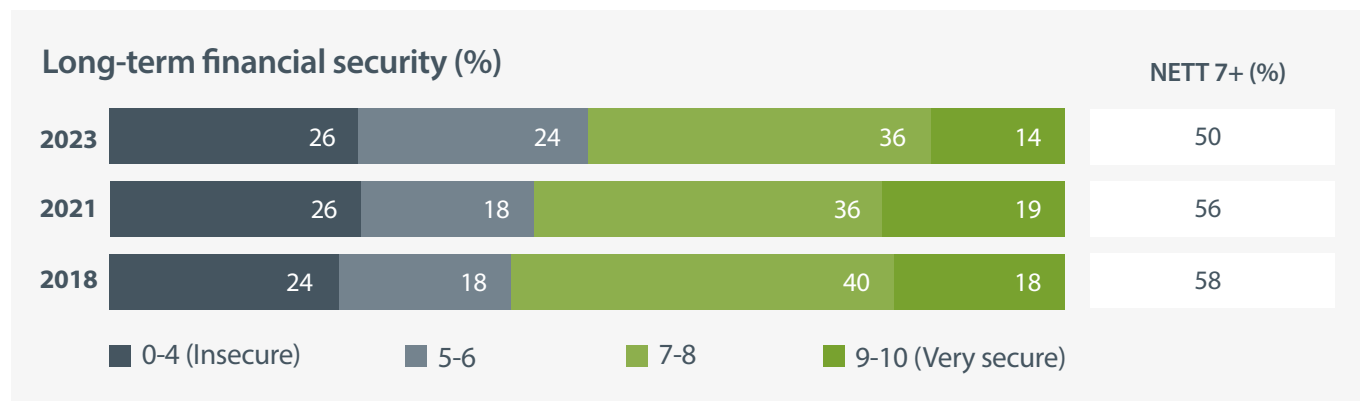
(n=155)



Q2205. Do you intend on going on a holiday to any of the following places in the next 12 months? MULTIPLE RESPONSE Base: All participants (n=214), Q2206. What are the reasons for this? MULTIPLE RESPONSE Base: Those not intending to take a holiday interstate or overseas in the next 12 months (n=155)

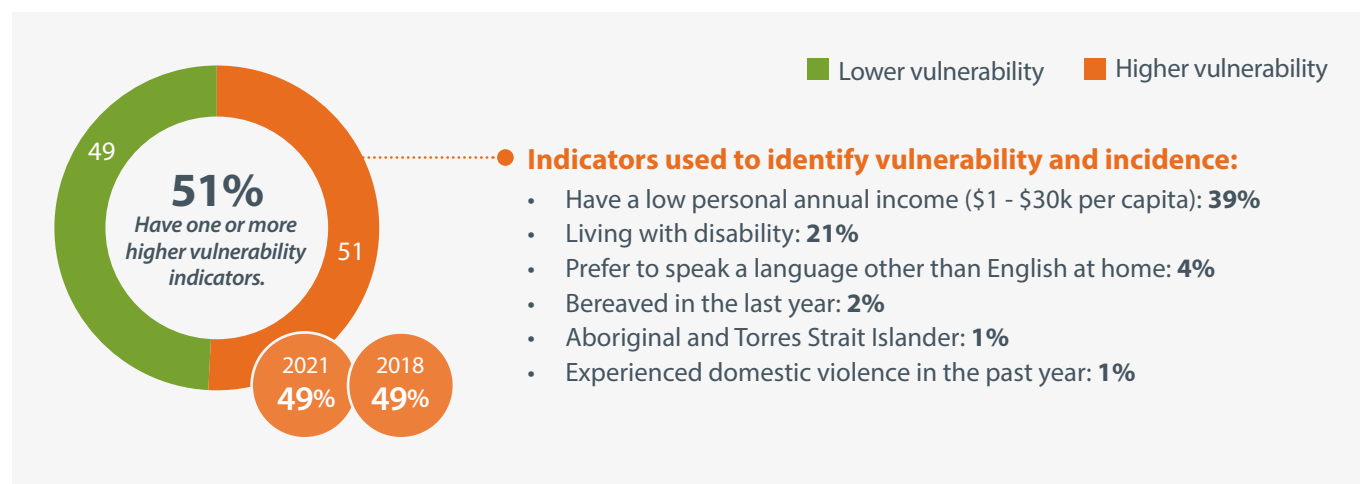
Financial security

Half of older Tasmanians feel secure about their finances being able to meet their needs for the rest of their lives. However, this has seen a gradual decline since 2018.



Half (50%) rated their long-term financial security as high, at a 7 or more out of 10, although this is less than in 2021 (56%). The other half don't feel secure, giving a 6 or below. Around a quarter (26%) feel quite insecure, rating between 0 and 4. Only 14% felt very secure (rating a 9 or 10), which is lower than 2021 (19%).

Around one in two Tasmanians aged 50+ are vulnerable – remaining steady since the 2021 study.



Looking particularly at those older Tasmanians who could be considered more at risk, and using the indicators listed in the chart above to create a segmentation, we see that people with one or more indicators of higher vulnerability represent just over half of all survey participants (51%), slightly above the 2021 study (49%).

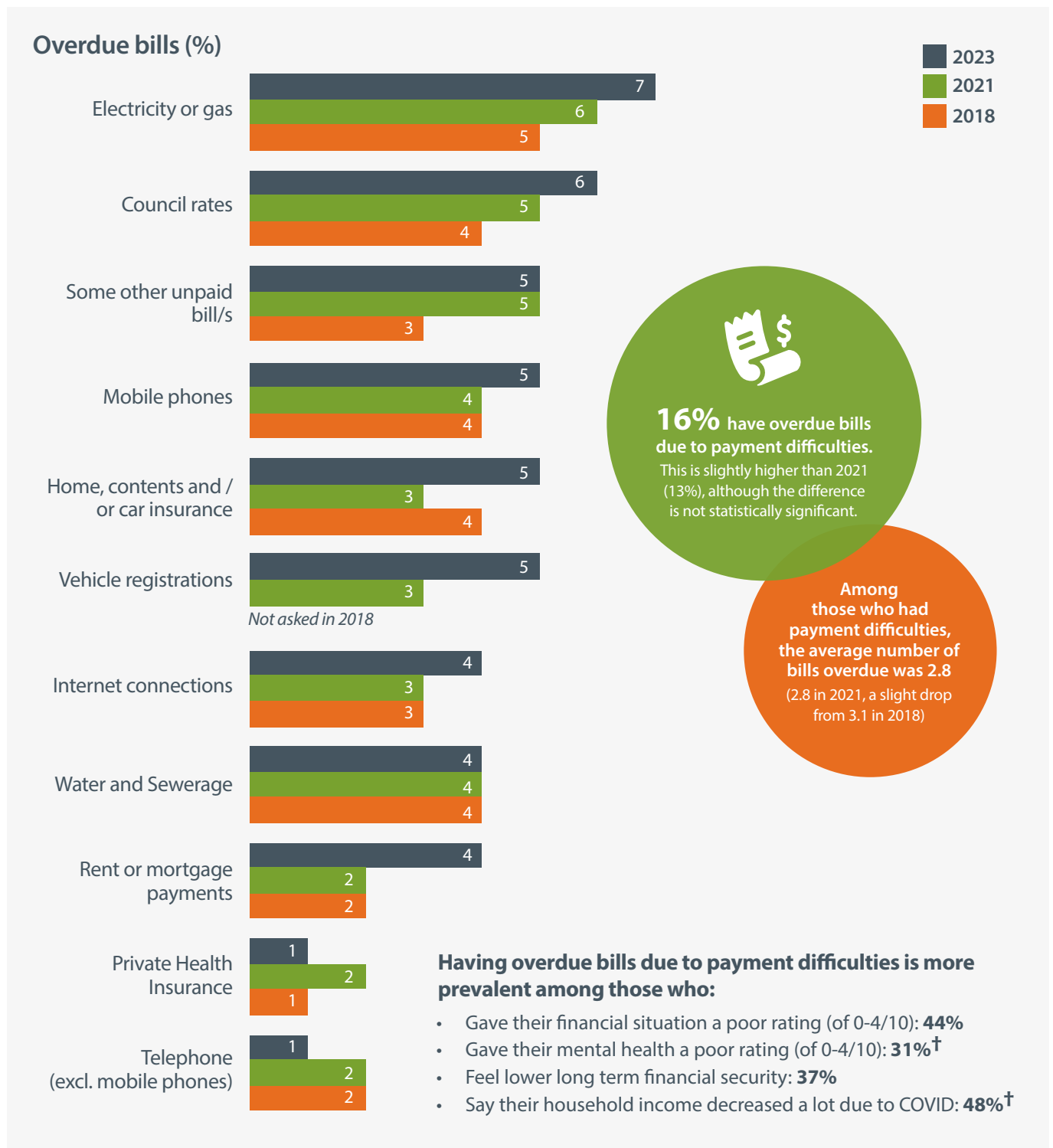
The higher vulnerability group is more likely to live in regional areas (59%).

These results highlight a group of older, vulnerable people whose needs deserve particular attention, especially as the proportion of those with higher vulnerability has slightly increased since the 2018 study.

Q40. How secure do you feel about your finances (income from all sources and savings) being able to meet your needs throughout the rest of your life? / This vulnerability measure is a composite of: DM7. Do any of the following apply to you? DM8. Have you personally experienced any of these in the last year? DM14 & DM15. And what is the combined annual income of everyone in your household, from all sources before tax or other deductions? Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2021: n=235, 2018: n=202)

Financial security cont.

Around one in six older Tasmanians have overdue bills due to payment difficulties and there are often multiple bills due rather than just one. Overdue electricity or gas bills are most common and this has gradually increased wave on wave.



Q41. Does your household currently have any bills from this list that are overdue specifically because you are having difficulty paying them?
 MULTIPLE RESPONSE Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2021: n=235, 2018: n=202)

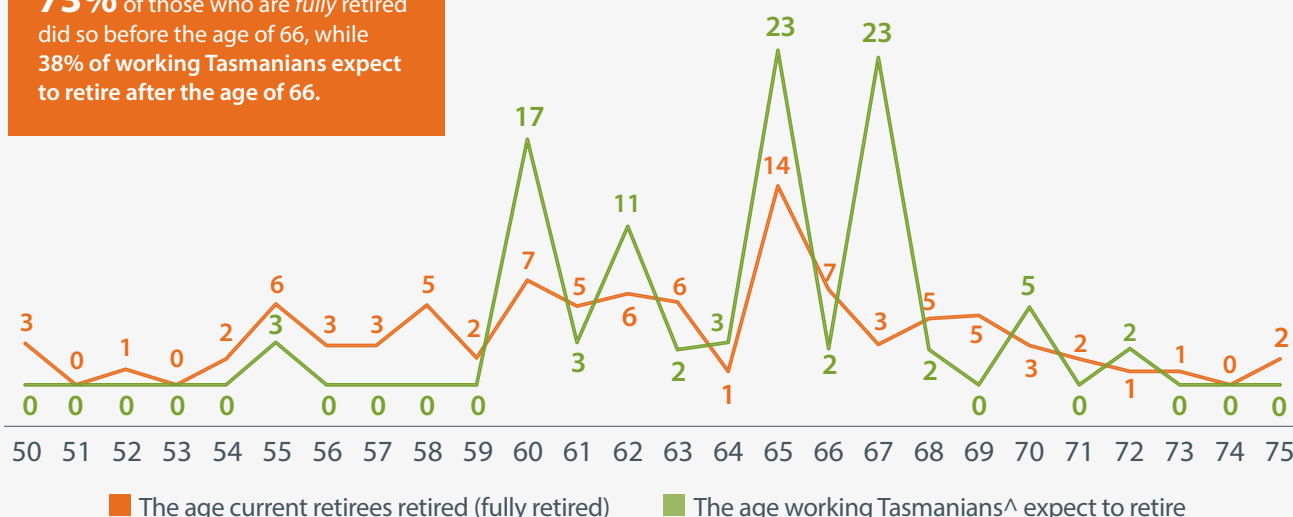
[†]Based on a low sample size (n<30): treat with caution

Employment

Older workers are expecting to retire later than when their retired counterparts were able to retire, and a third (33%) feel they will never retire, which is consistent with 2021.

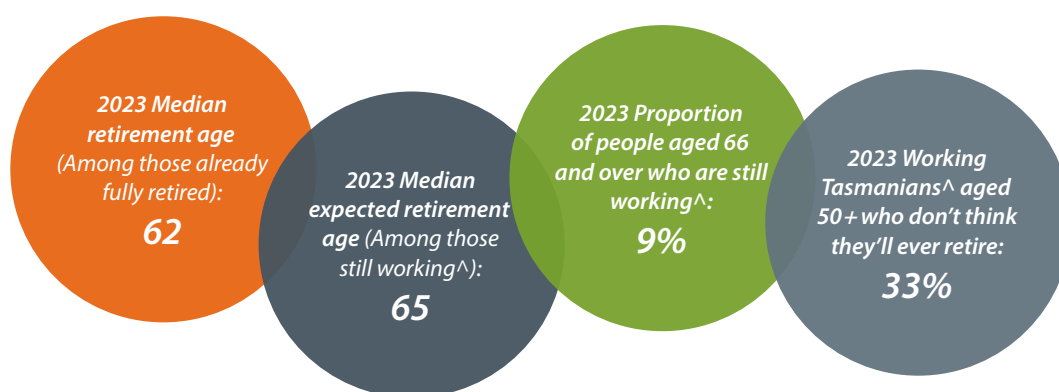
Age at which Tasmanians have fully retired, or expect to retire (%)

73% of those who are *fully retired* did so before the age of 66, while **38%** of working Tasmanians expect to retire after the age of 66.



Older workers are expecting to retire later than the age at which already-retired Tasmanians did. For example, only 3% of retired Tasmanians retired at 67, but 23% of older Tasmanians still working expect they will retire at this age. Or, 6% retired at 55, while only 3% of older Tasmanian workers now expect to retire at this age.

While this may in part reflect the increased age at which Australians can access the Age Pension (66 years and 6 months as of July 2021), it also points to the need for older Tasmanians to continue working due to financial insecurity.



22% have experienced **employment-related discrimination** since turning 50 (20% in 2021): **18%** experienced it while seeking work / employment (slight increase from 16% in 2021) and **10%** experienced it while in the workplace.

Q21. What is your current employment status? Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2021: n=235, 2018: n=202) / Q22. At what age did you retire / partially retire from paid employment or self employment? Base: Respondents who are retired (2023: n=102, 2021: 104, 2018: n=103).

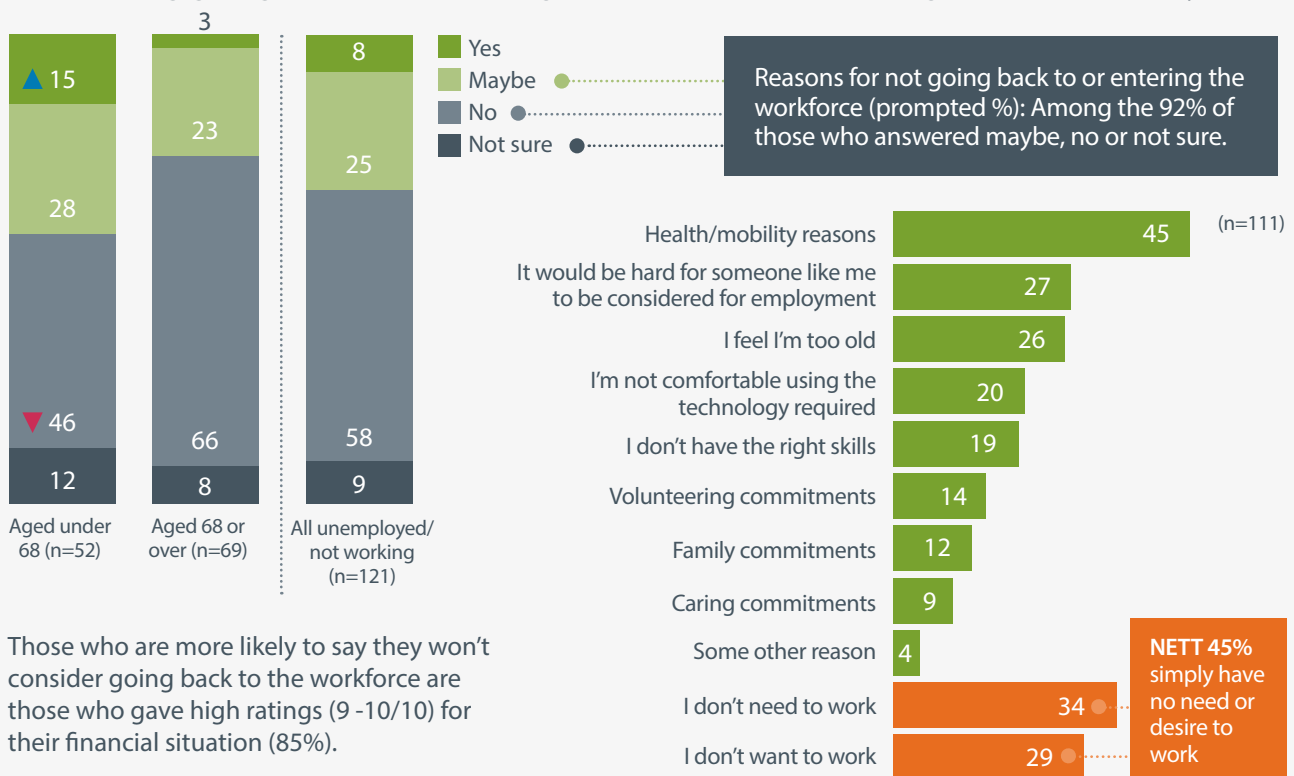
Q23. At what age, roughly, do you think you will fully retire? Base: Participants who are employed (2023: n=74, 2021: 103, 2018: n=74).

^NB In 2023 semi-retired participants were included in these items and results are not directly comparable to previous waves.

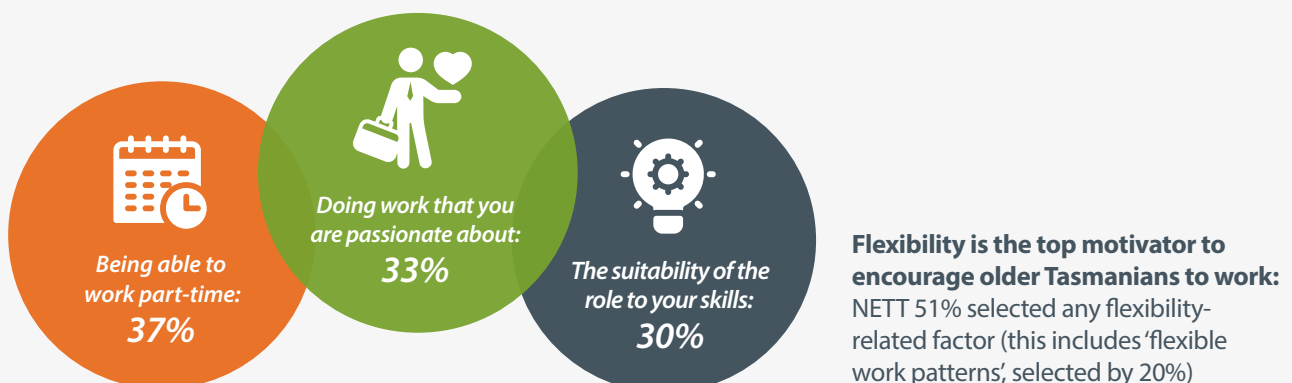
Employment cont.

Consideration to re-enter the workforce is relatively low among those who aren't working, but those aged under 68 are more likely to consider it. The biggest barriers to rejoining are health or mobility issues, a lack of need to work, and the perception that they are simply 'too old'.

Considering going back to or entering the workforce (%): Among those not employed



Top three things that might encourage entering the workforce (prompted %): Among those not employed

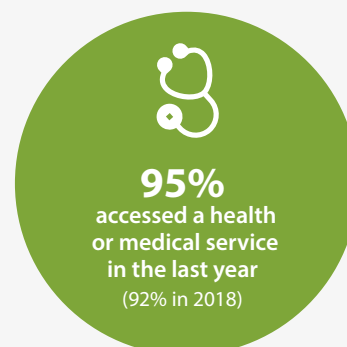
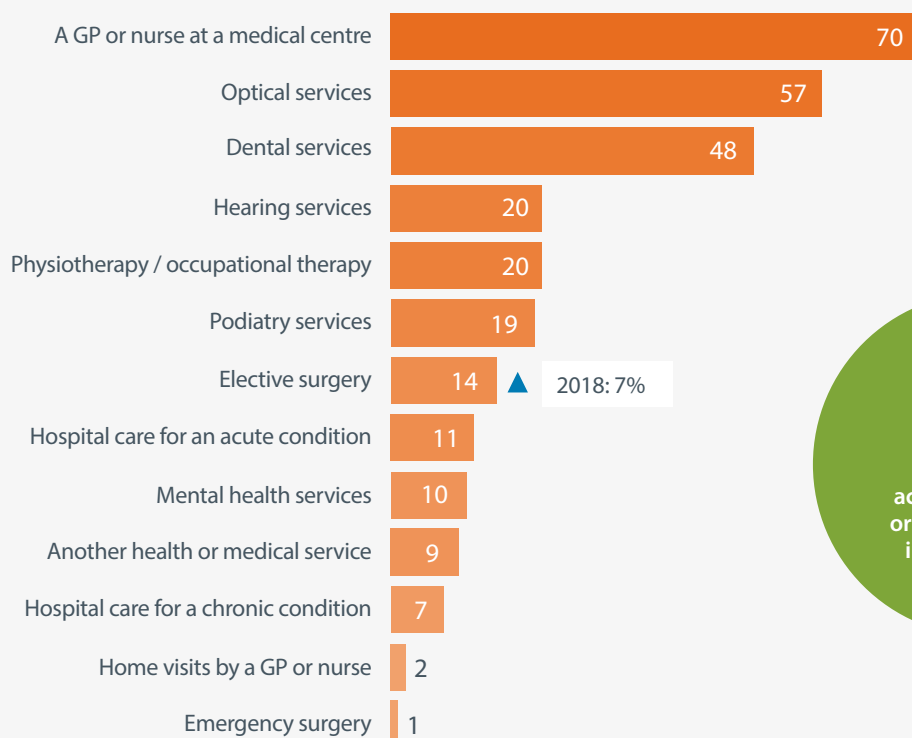


Q2201. Would you consider going back into the workforce / entering paid employment? Base: Participants who are not working or employed (n=121) Q2202. What are the reasons why you would not go back into the workforce / enter paid employment? MULTIPLE RESPONSE Base: Those who did not select 'Yes' to Q2201 (n=111) Q2203. Which of the following things might encourage you to go back into the workforce? Base: Participants who are not working or employed (n=121)

Health

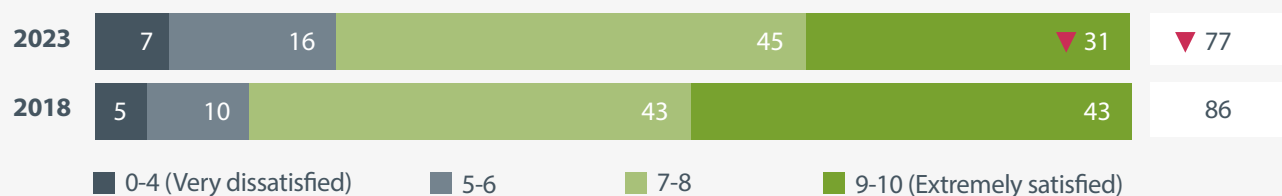
The majority of older Tasmanians accessed health and medical services in the last year. Visits to medical centre GPs or nurses remain most common, but accessing elective (non-emergency) surgery has increased significantly since 2018.

Health and medical services used (%)*



Satisfaction with services used (%): Among those who accessed a service

NETT satisfied
7+ (%)



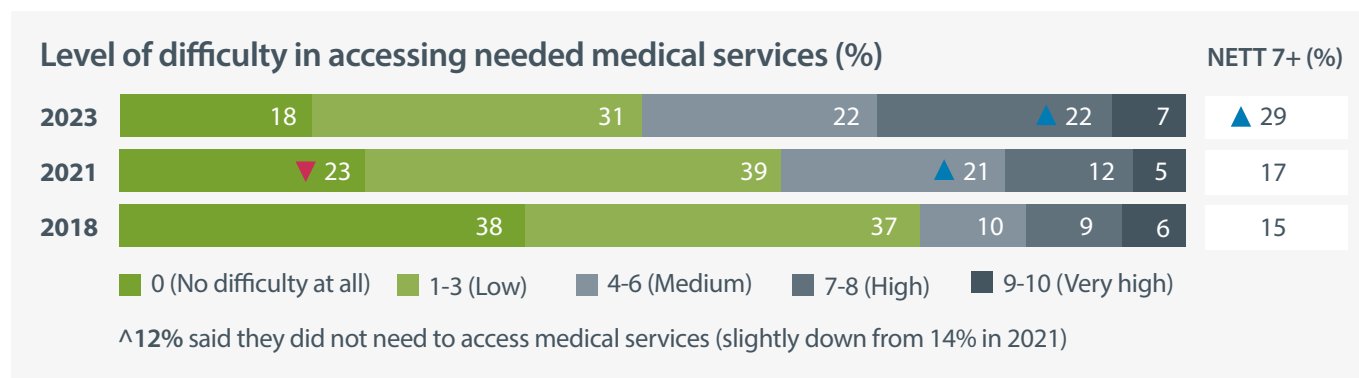
Overall, satisfaction with health services has decreased over the past 4 years, though most (77%) remain satisfied. The proportion of those feeling quite satisfied (rating 7+ / 10) has decreased significantly since 2018 (from 86% to 77% in 2023) while the proportion of those very dissatisfied (rating 0-4) has slightly increased from 5% to 7%.

Q44. Which of the following have you had / accessed in the last year? MULTIPLE RESPONSE Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2018: n=202)

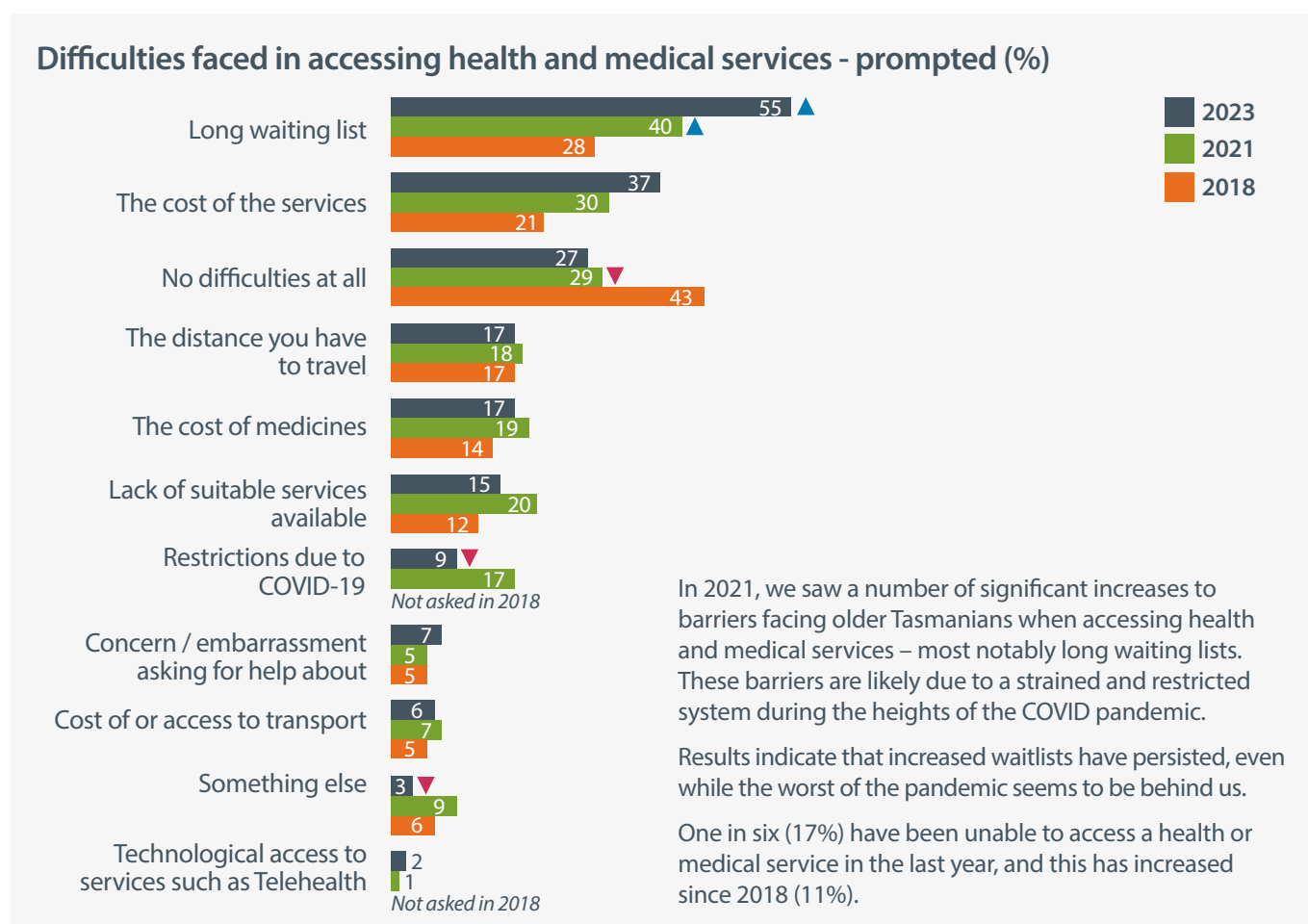
*Not asked in 2021. Q45. In general, how satisfied are you with the health and medical services you have used in the last year?

Base: Those who accessed a health and medical service (2023 n=203, 2018: n=186) *Not asked in 2021.

Significantly more older Tasmanians report experiencing difficulty in accessing medical services, with almost three in ten (29%) now rating their level of difficulty as high (7 or more out of 10).



While nearly half (49%) continue to experience a low level of difficulty accessing services (rating 0-3/10), the proportion finding access to services highly difficult (7+) grew significantly to 29%, from 17% in 2021. Difficulty is more commonly experienced by those rating their physical health poorly (50%), and those who saw their income decrease a lot due to COVID (57%).



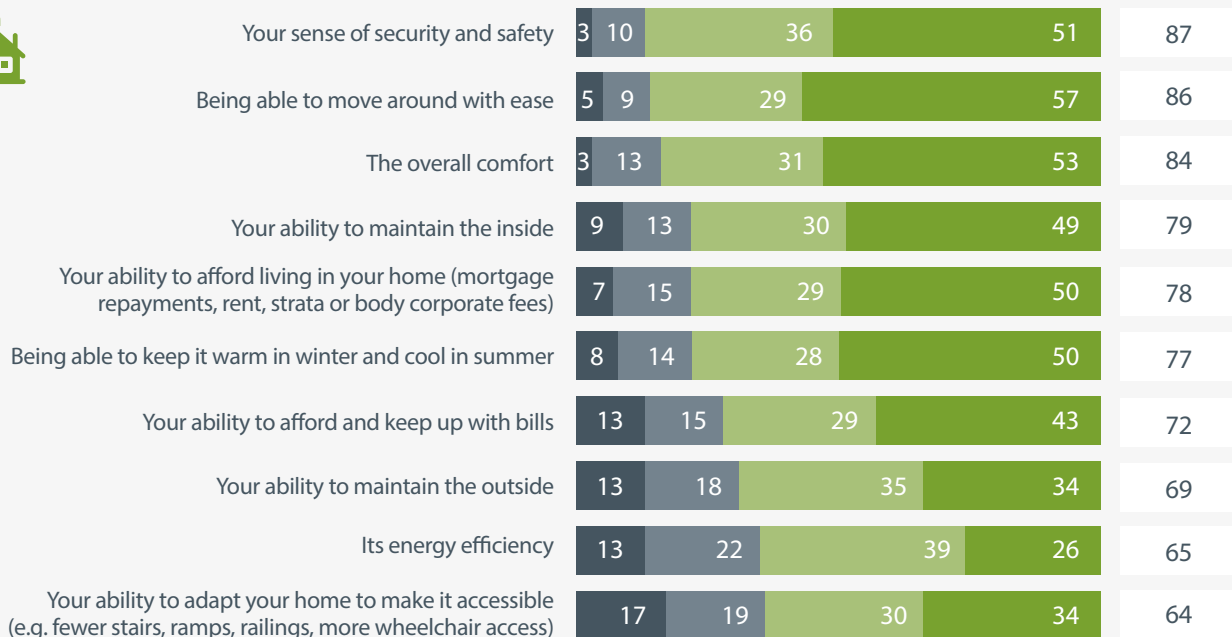
Q47. How difficult, if at all, is it for you to access the health and medical services you need? Scale: 0 = no difficulties at all, 10 = extremely difficult. Base: Those who have been unable to access a health or medical service in the past year *excluding those who haven't tried to access (2023: n=189 2021: n=202, 2018: n=184) Q46. Looking at the same list of services, have you been unable to access any of them in the last year despite wanting to? Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2018: n=202) Q48. Which of the following difficulties do you have in accessing the health and medical services you need? MULTIPLE RESPONSE Base: All participants who had difficulty accessing health and medical services (2023: n=156, 2021: n=155, 2018: n=113); ^Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2021: n=235)

Housing

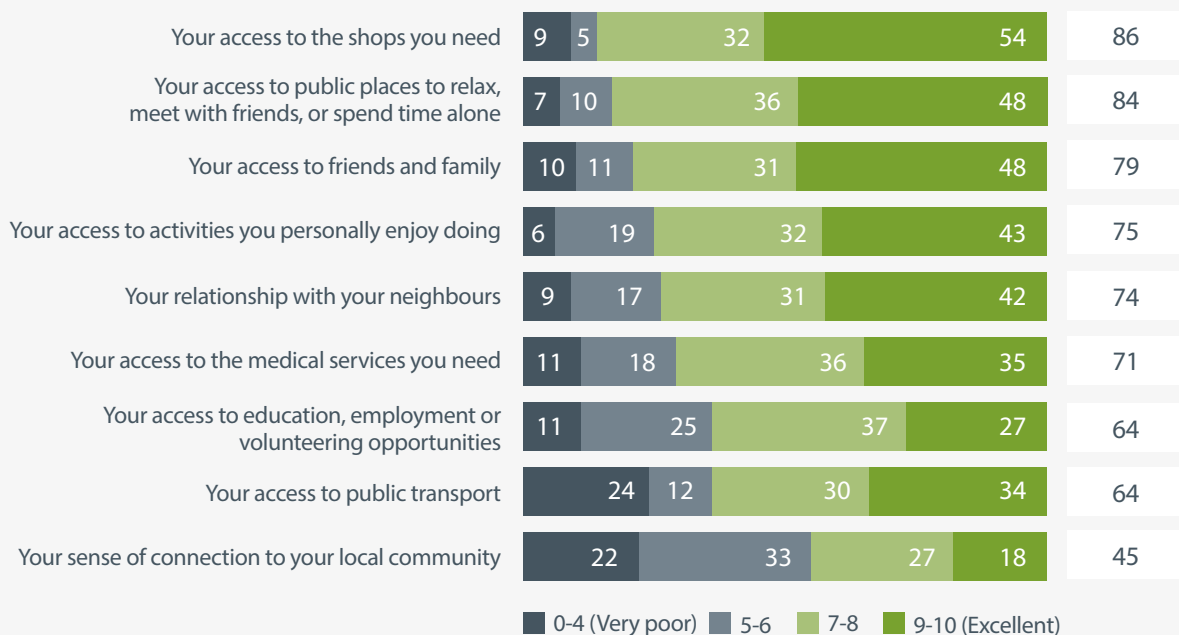
The majority rate their sense of security and safety, overall comfort, and ease of moving around in their homes highly and are positive about the area in which they live, while 17% rate their ability to adapt their home to make it more accessible as very poor.

Ratings of the following aspects of their home (%)

NETT 7+ (%)



Ratings of the following aspects of their area (%)

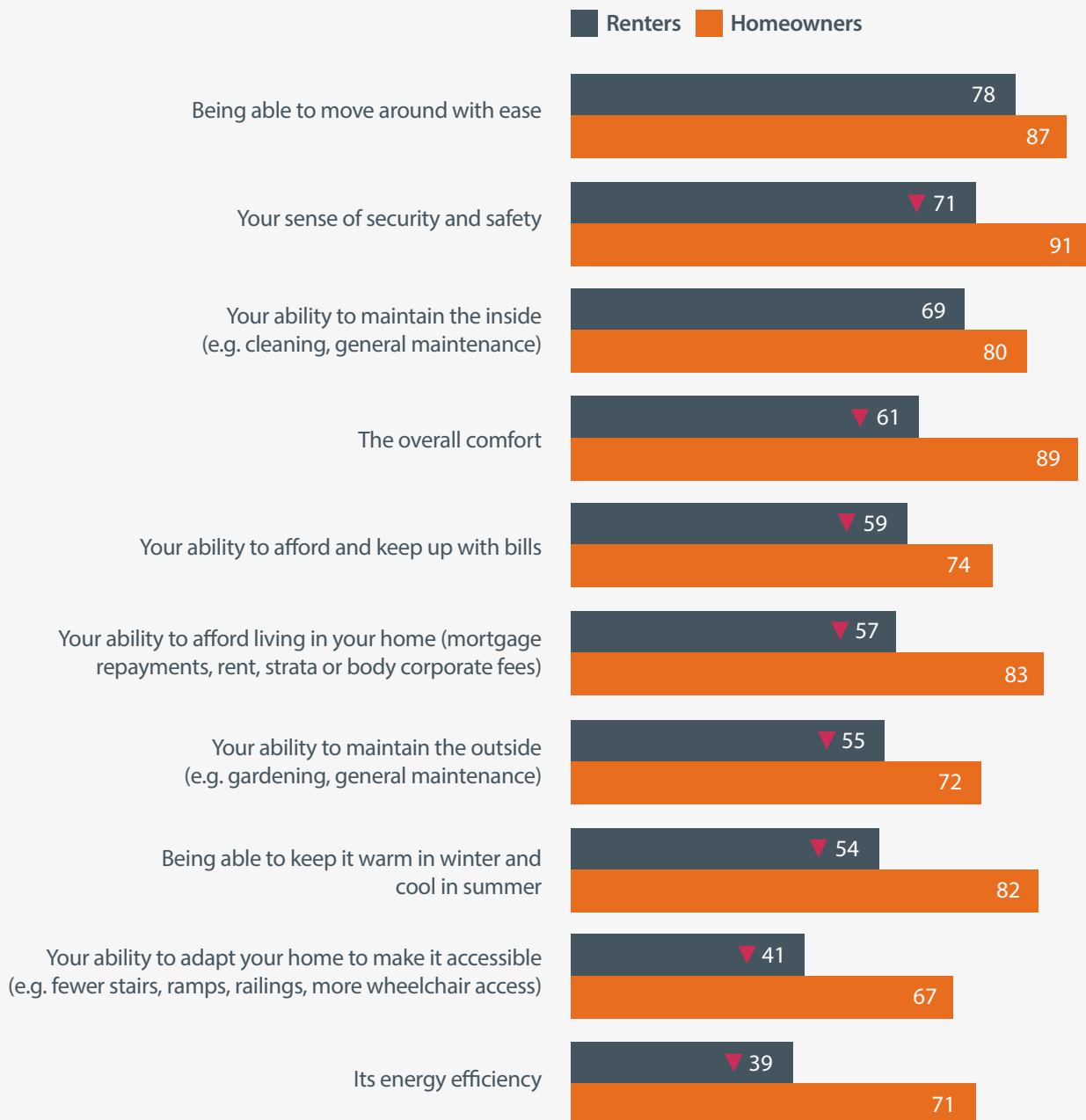


Older participants (aged 70 and over) are more likely to rate nearly all aspects a 7 or more out of 10, compared to those younger (50-69).

Q2208. How would you rate the following things in relation to the home where you currently live? (n= 178-214) / Q2207. How would you rate the following things in relation to the area that you currently live in? (n= 154-214)

Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) older Tasmanians surveyed are renting, with this cohort significantly less likely to be satisfied with most aspects of their living situation compared to those who own their home.

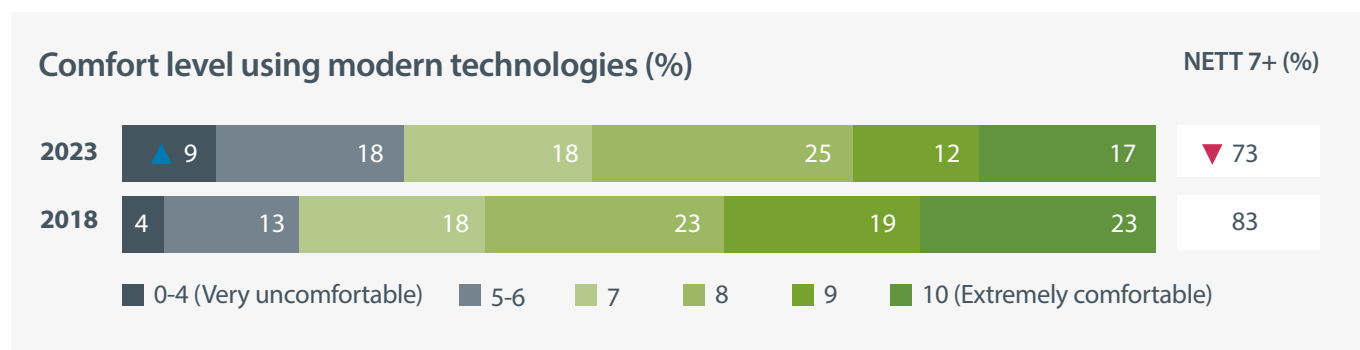
Ratings of the following aspects of their home (% rating 7+ out of 10)*



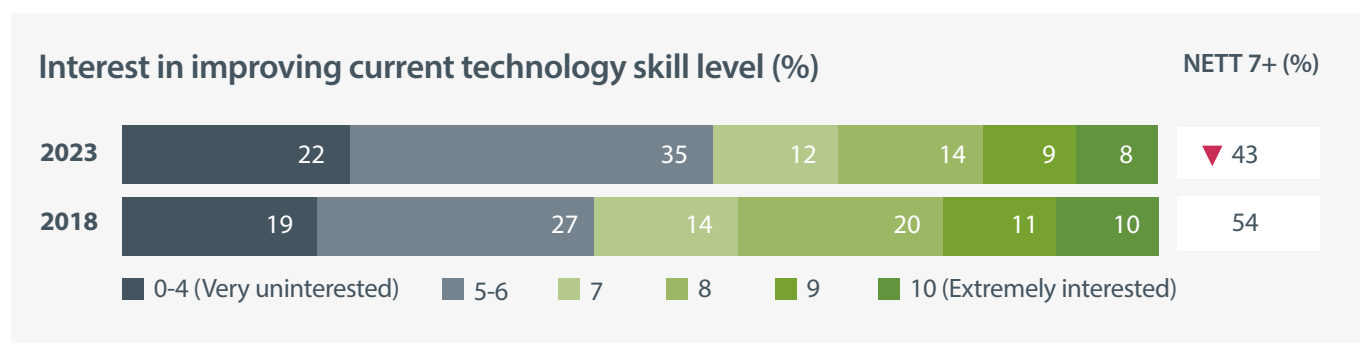
Q2208 - How would you rate the following things in relation to the home where you currently live? / Base: Renters (n=39), Homeowners (n=169)
 *Excluding 'Not applicable'

Technology

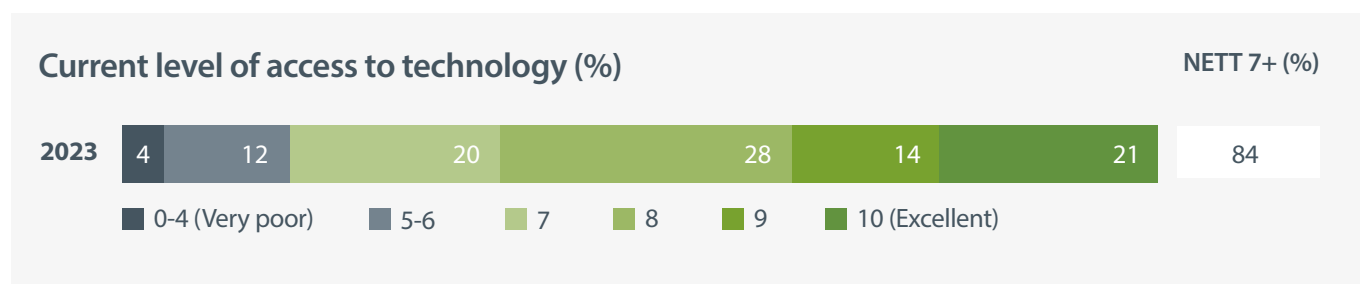
Around 3 in 4 older Tasmanians feel comfortable using technology, however this has decreased significantly since 2021 (83%). While a large majority have good access to technology and think it makes their life more convenient, their interest in improving their skills has fallen.



Nearly three in four report having a high level of comfort with technology, and this level of comfort is more evident among those aged under 60.



43% of older Tasmanians have a high level of interest in improving their technology skills, and this level of interest is fairly consistent across age groups. This is however a significant decrease from the last survey in 2021 (54%).

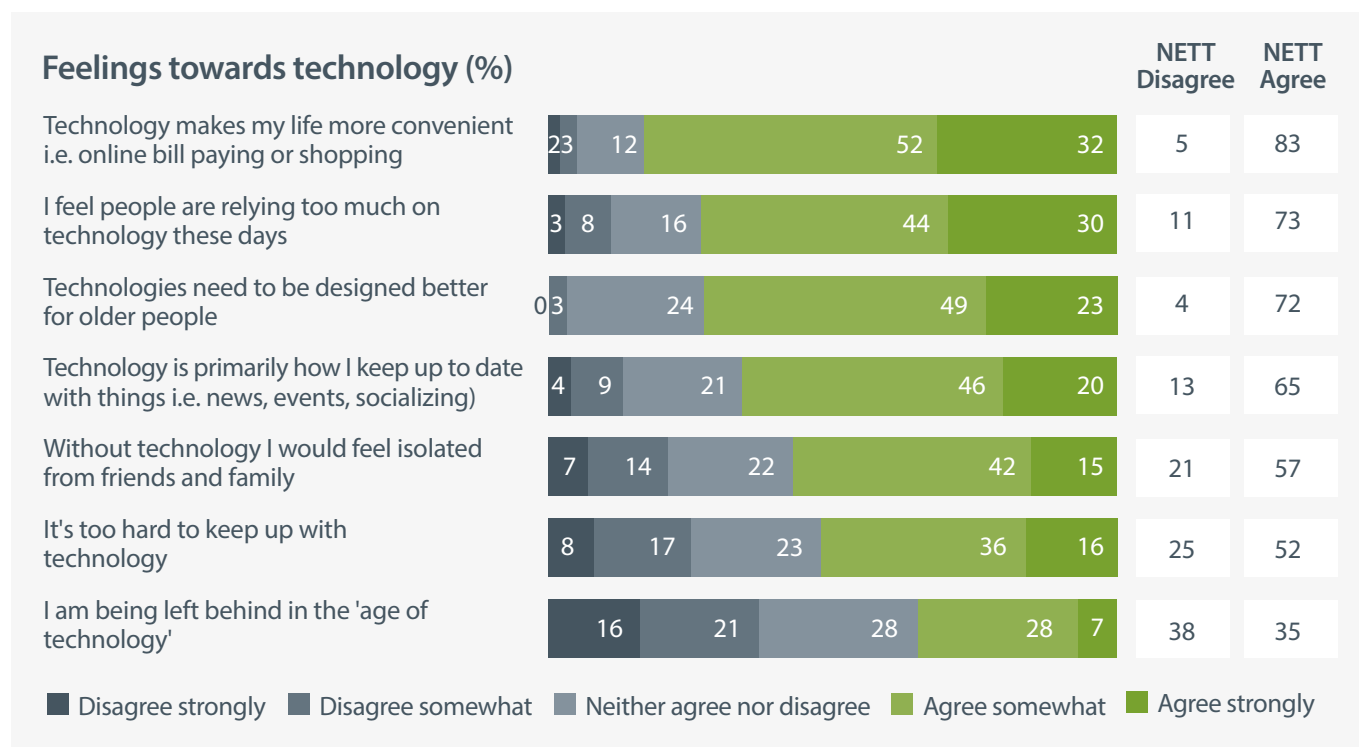


More than eight in ten reported having good access to technology (rating 7 or more out of 10), with one in five reporting 'excellent' access.

Q95. How comfortable do you feel in using modern technologies like computers and the internet, mobile phones, etc? // Q96. And how interested are you in improving your current skill levels in using modern technologies like computers and the internet, mobile phones, etc? // Q2213. How would you rate your current level of access to technologies such as computers, the internet and mobile phone services? Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2021: n=235)

Technology cont.

While eight in ten agree that technology makes their life convenient, nearly three-quarters feel people are relying too much on technology these days. More than seven in 10 feel technology needs to be better designed for older people, and a third feel they are being left behind in the age of technology.



Contact

Q2214. How much do you agree or disagree with the following? Base: All participants (2023: n=214, 2021: n=235)

COTA Tasmania

Level 12, 39 Murray St Hobart Tasmania 7000

PO Box 4679 Hobart Tasmania 7000

P: 03 6231 3265

E: admin@cotatas.org.au

W: www.cotatas.org.au

Twitter: @COTATas

Facebook: www.facebook.com/COTATas

COTA Federation Members

The COTA Federation is a collaboration of the nine Councils on the Ageing across Australia.

Research undertaken by

SEC Newgate Research (a division of SEC Newgate Australia)

Level 17, 35 Collins Street

Melbourne VIC 3000

P: +61 3 9611 1850

E: research@secnewgate.com.au

www.secnewgate.com.au/service/

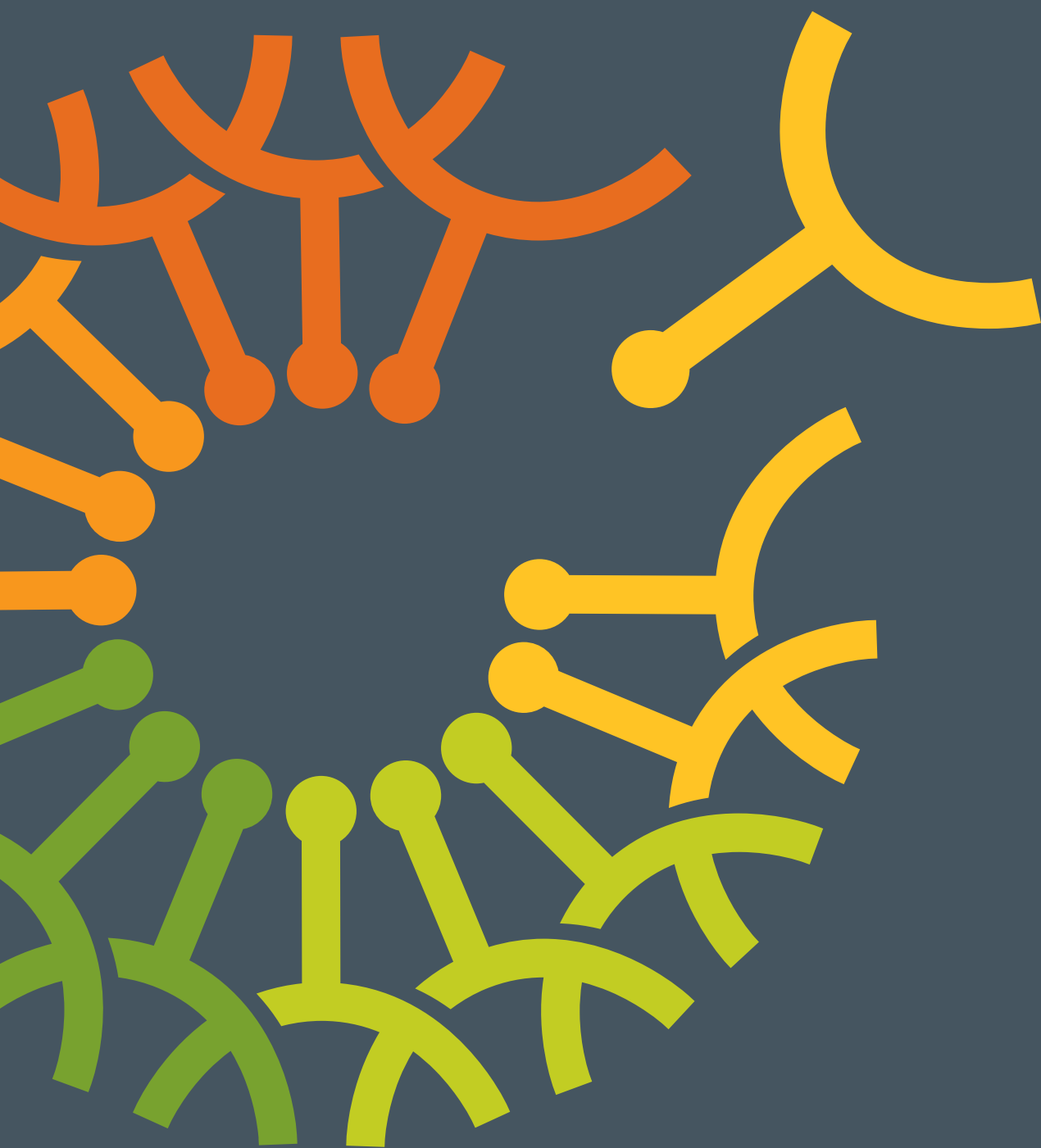
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