

COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOR AUSTRALIA Community Perceptions Survey (Charities) March 2025



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Background and Purpose

The Community Council for Australia (CCA) is an independent, non-partisan membership organisation committed to fostering thriving communities by supporting the exceptional efforts of Australia's charities and not-for-profit sector.

CCA aims to transform the interactions between governments, communities, and not-for-profits by offering a national voice and facilitating collaboration among sector leaders on shared issues impacting the contribution, performance, and sustainability of charities and volunteer organisations across Australia.

In 2025, Australian charities are navigating a complex landscape marked by increased demand for services, reduced donations, and higher operational costs due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Additionally, funding uncertainties have forced some charities to scale back or discontinue essential services. In one case, a long-established national helpline providing support to Australians experiencing grief may be forced to close after an unexpected withdrawal of federal funding, despite experiencing more than a doubling in demand for its services over the past year.

In 2021 and 2025, CCA commissioned Piazza Research, an independent professional research firm, to survey 20 of Australia's electorates, including many key marginal seats. Voters in these electorates were asked about their perceptions and awareness of charities, and how their local Member of Parliament's (MP) actions towards charities might influence their voting decisions.

The insights from the CCA Community Perceptions Survey are crucial for informing strategies to strengthen and support the sector's resilience and effectiveness in serving Australian communities.

Methodology

Survey design and data collection

The CCA Community Perceptions Survey was developed by Piazza Research in conjunction with CCA. The survey was distributed via email in March 2025, to electors using ISO Quality Certified industry panels within electoral areas. Electorates were selected to include a range of marginal seats and ensure all States and Territories were represented. Marginal electorates are those held by a small majority with a winning 2 party preferred vote margin 6% or less at the last election. Piazza Research sampled each of these electorates across Australia and respondents completed the survey online.

Sample design and sample confidence

Research industry panels were used when collecting data to maximise the quality and representativeness of the returned survey sample. In total 4,601 responses were collected across the 20 electorates. Any skews in the collected data have been corrected using post-stratification weighting (or cell weighting) based on gender, age group, income levels and electorate population. This adjusts each respondent's influence on the results to ensure the sample distribution matches the Australian Bureau of Statistics population distribution.

While the actual returned sample for the survey was 4,601 the effective sample size for the study after weighting is 3,634. For the 95% confidence interval, responses across electorates provided results accurate to within a margin of error of between +/- 5% to 10% for most electorates providing generally reliable results. Bass, (+/-14%) and Lingiari (+/-16%) have higher margins of error due to smaller samples. Use results for these two electorates with some caution.

Data processing and analysis

The returned survey data was analysed using R Studio software and MS excel. Descriptive statistics have been provided in graphical format and included in this report.

Key Findings

Strong community engagement with charities and volunteer organisations - The majority of electors are engaged with the charitable sector in one or more ways (89%), with 79% having donated to a charity and 38% having volunteered. Fourteen per cent (14%) have connected with others who share common interests through a charity, and 11% have received support or services from a charity. This demonstrates widespread community involvement with, and support, for Australia's charity sector.

High public awareness of most charity activities, with some gaps - Awareness levels are high for well-established charitable activities, particularly emergency assistance such as firefighting and flood relief, emergency food hampers, and wildlife rescue. There is lower awareness for certain areas including fence-building for farmers after disasters, support for children in evacuation centres, and community arts groups, indicating potential areas for increased public communication and advocacy.

Charities are viewed as critical to community wellbeing - An overwhelming majority of electors (ranging from 93% to 99% across the electorates) regard charities as somewhat or very important to themselves, their communities, and Australia's future. This underscores the continued vital role of the sector.

Clear desire for MPs to take stronger action to support charities - Between 62% and 82% of respondents across all selected electorates want their local MP to push for improved fundraising rules, highlighting ongoing dissatisfaction with existing frameworks.

In almost all surveyed electorates, the majority of electors (typically exceeding 70%) consider it somewhat or very important for their local member of parliament to take more action to get the Australian Government to work closer with charities to help the Australian Community.

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

Widespread support for local MPs achieving key charity sector goals – Electors in the surveyed seats show high levels of support for their MPs to advance key charity sector initiatives (between 86% and 92%):

- Appoint a Federal Minister for Charities (86%)
- Boost productivity and support - ‘pay what it takes’ to operate programs and services (91%)
- Fully implement industry plan so charities have the staff, volunteers and capacity to offer better services (92%)
- Make it easier for people to give to charities - allow all donations to registered charities to be tax deductible (92%)
- Offer more government support to charities to drive major reforms (environment, emergency services, digital economy) (90%)
- Include experienced and knowledgeable charities in the Government’s planning and policy priorities (91%)

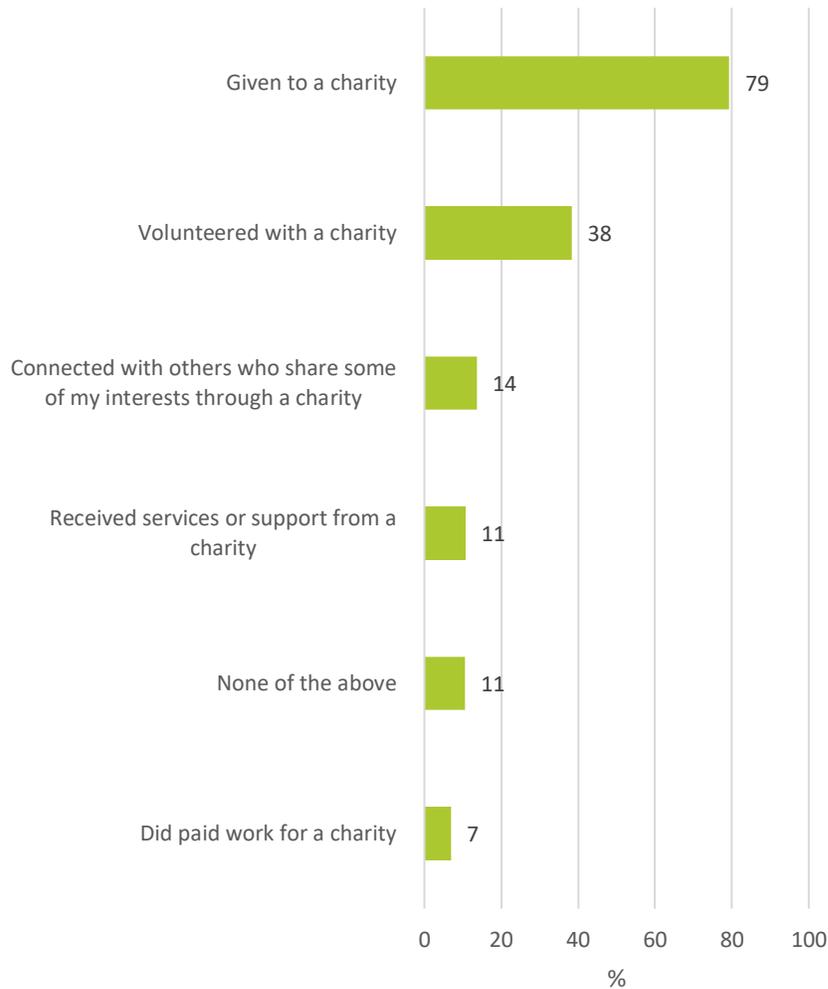
Electoral impact: charity policy influences voter behaviour - In the electorates, voter support for election candidates is closely linked to charity policy. For most electorates surveyed (19 out of 22), between 50% and 66% of electors are more likely to vote for a candidate who can improve government policy for charities. Importantly, 51% of currently undecided voters indicate this issue would influence their vote, making charity policy a key consideration for candidates.

Voters expect closer government and charity collaboration - A strong majority of electors (between 87% and 99%) believe it is important that their MP encourages the Australian Government to work more closely with charities. In addition, across the electorates, 65% to 80% of respondents want their MP to meet with charity sector representatives, reinforcing the electorate’s expectation for engagement and leadership on this issue.

Implications for the upcoming Federal election - The findings demonstrate that charity policy and MP engagement with the sector are significant factors influencing voter decisions. Candidates who are proactive and visible in supporting the charity sector are likely to improve their standing among voters, particularly given the large proportion of undecided and swing voters for whom this issue matters.

Detailed Findings

Respondent charity involvement



Overall 89% of electors engaged with charities in some way, with most people engaging in multiple ways.

Across the 20 surveyed seats, seventy-nine per cent (79%) of electors have given to a charity, and a substantial proportion (38%) have volunteered with a charity.

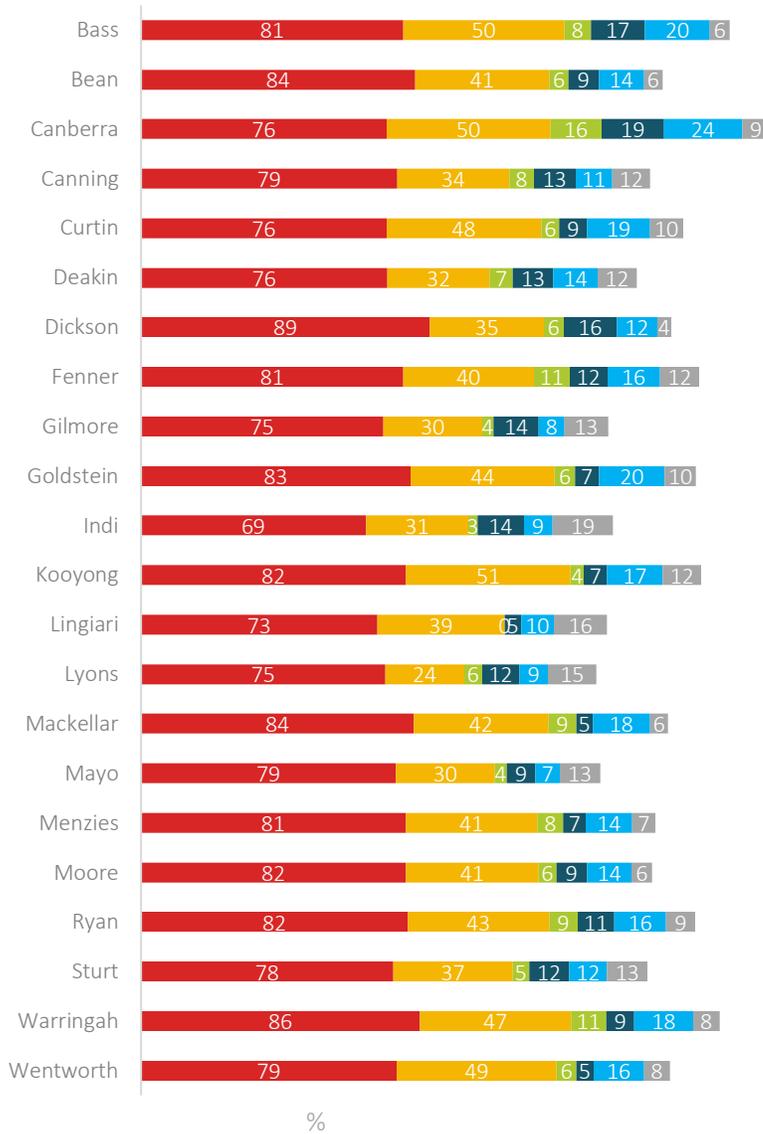
Fourteen per cent (14%) have connected with others who share similar interests through a charity, and over one in ten electors (11%) have received services or support from a charity. Seven per cent (7%) have undertaken paid work for a charity.

Most Australians in the surveyed electorates are clearly involved with or have supported the charity sector.

Note: Percentages in this graph add to more than 100% as electors could choose more than one answer.

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

Elector charity involvement by electorate



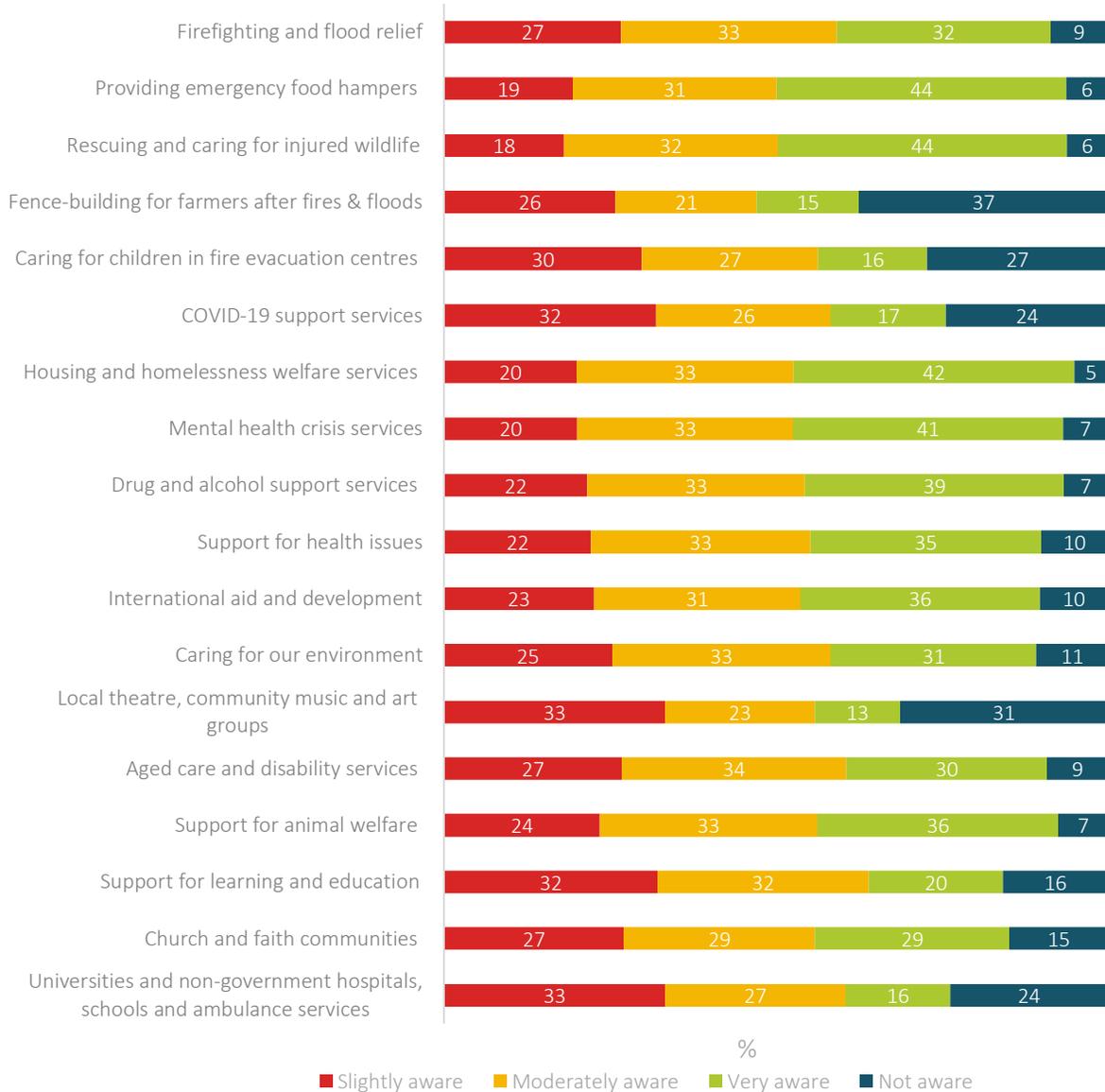
Giving to a charity and volunteering with a charity were the main methods of involvement in charities across all surveyed electorates.

- Given to a charity
- Volunteered with a charity
- Did paid work for a charity
- Received services or support from a charity
- Connected with others who share some of my interests through a charity
- None of the above

Note: Percentages in this graph add to more than 100% as electors could choose more than one answer.

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

Awareness of Australian charities and volunteer organisations



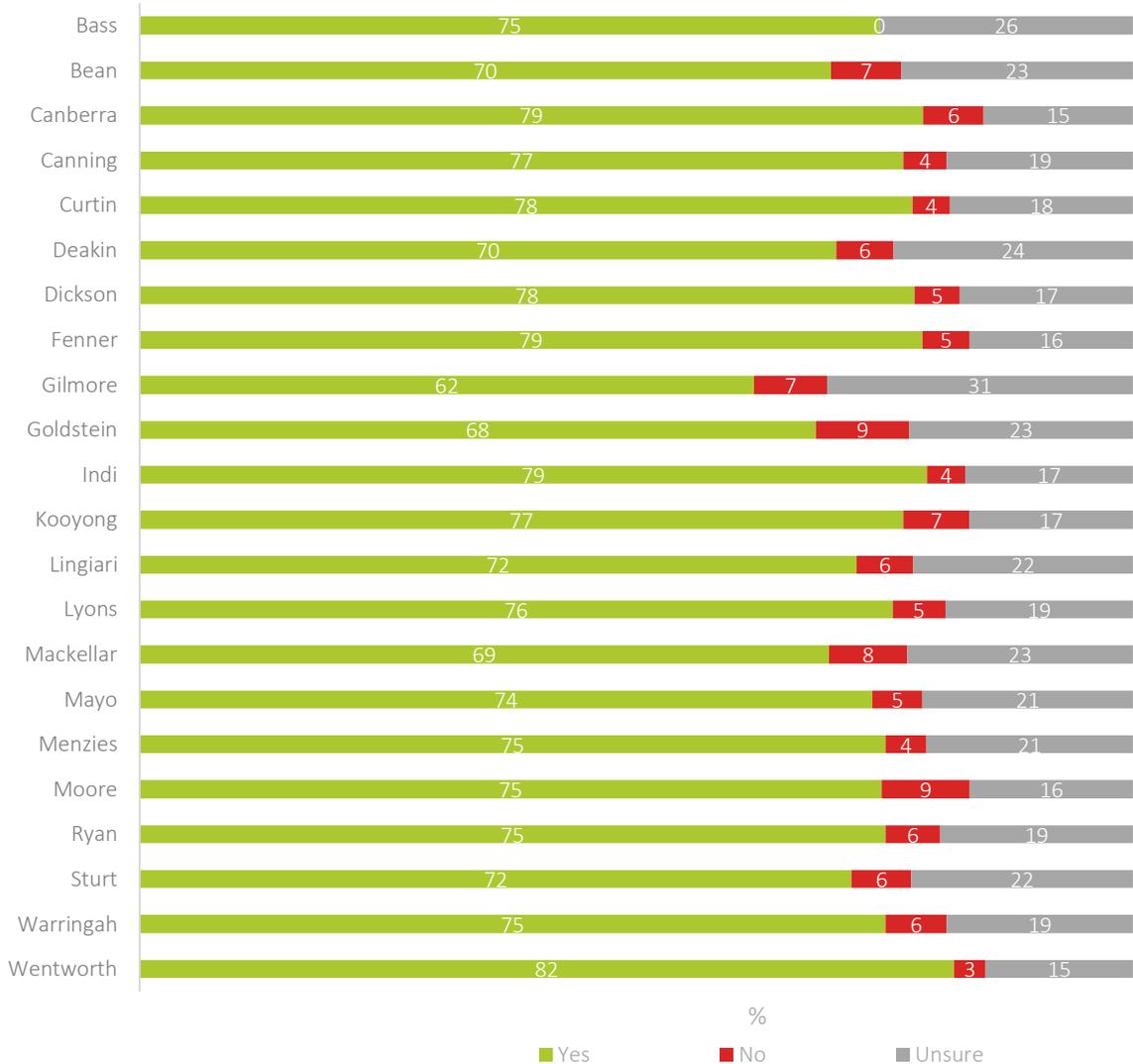
Overall, awareness of different types of charities among electors is generally high, with most types showing moderate to very high awareness within the community.

Charities providing emergency assistance, such as firefighting and flood relief, emergency food hampers, and wildlife care attract the highest awareness levels.

In contrast, electors are less familiar with charities focused on fence-building for farmers after disasters, caring for children in evacuation centres, and local arts and community groups (although awareness levels are still high).

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

Would you like to see your local MP make greater efforts to get the Australian Government to improve fundraising rules to make it easier for charities to raise money?

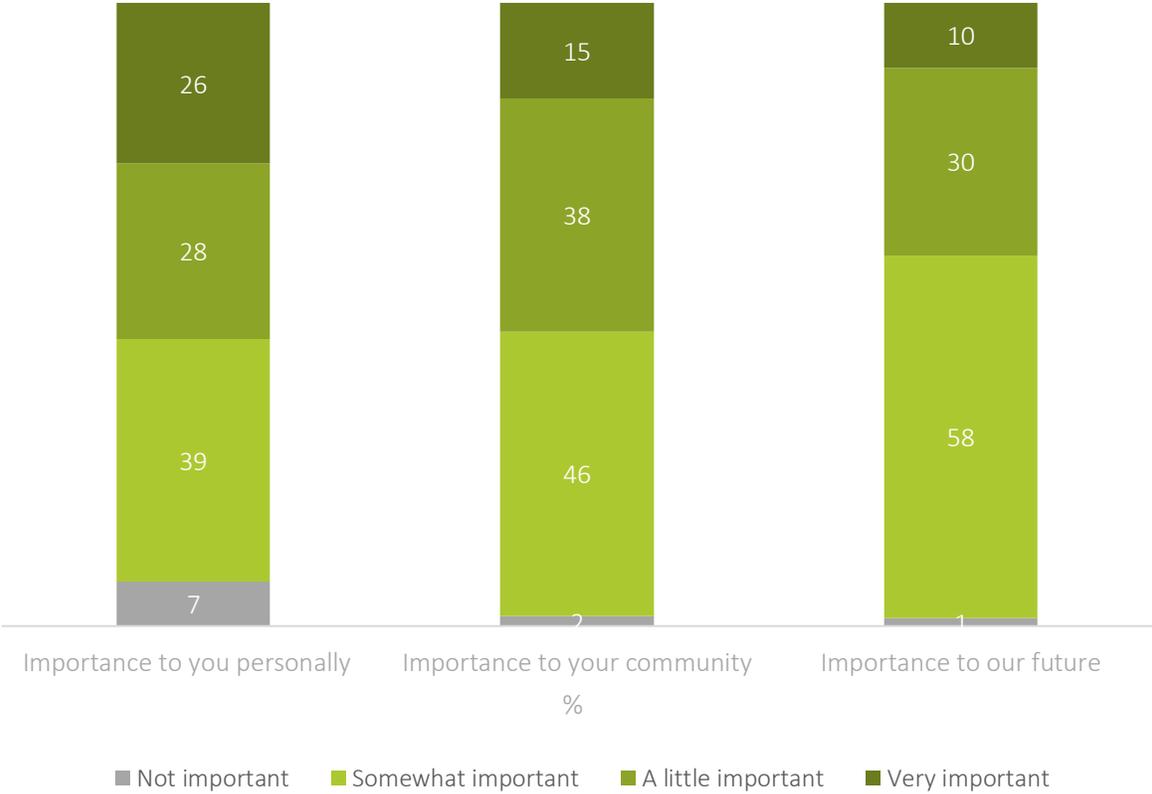


(Research in May 2021 and 2025 by Piazza Research showed that current fundraising rules and regulations are making it too difficult for charities to raise money to help the community).

High percentages of electors across all surveyed electorates (ranging from 62% to 82%) wanted their local MP to make greater efforts to get the Australian Government to improve fundraising rules for charities. This result is similar to the 2021 study, suggesting communities are generally still not satisfied with their MPs efforts to improve funding rules for charities.

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

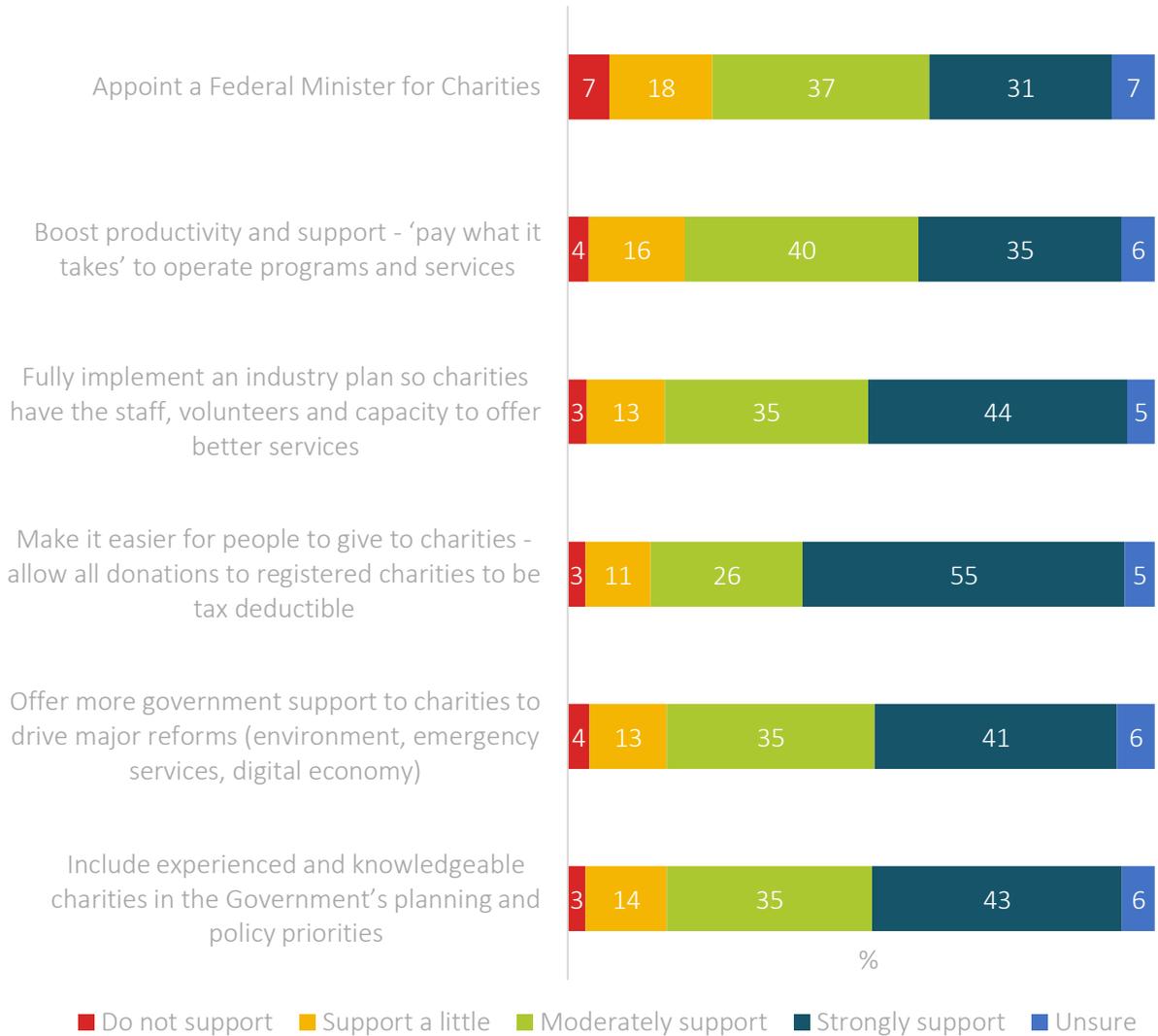
Importance of charities



The majority of electors (93% to 99% across the selected electorates) consider charities somewhat or very important to themselves, to their community and to our future.

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

How strongly would you support your local member of parliament achieving the following goals for Australian Charities?

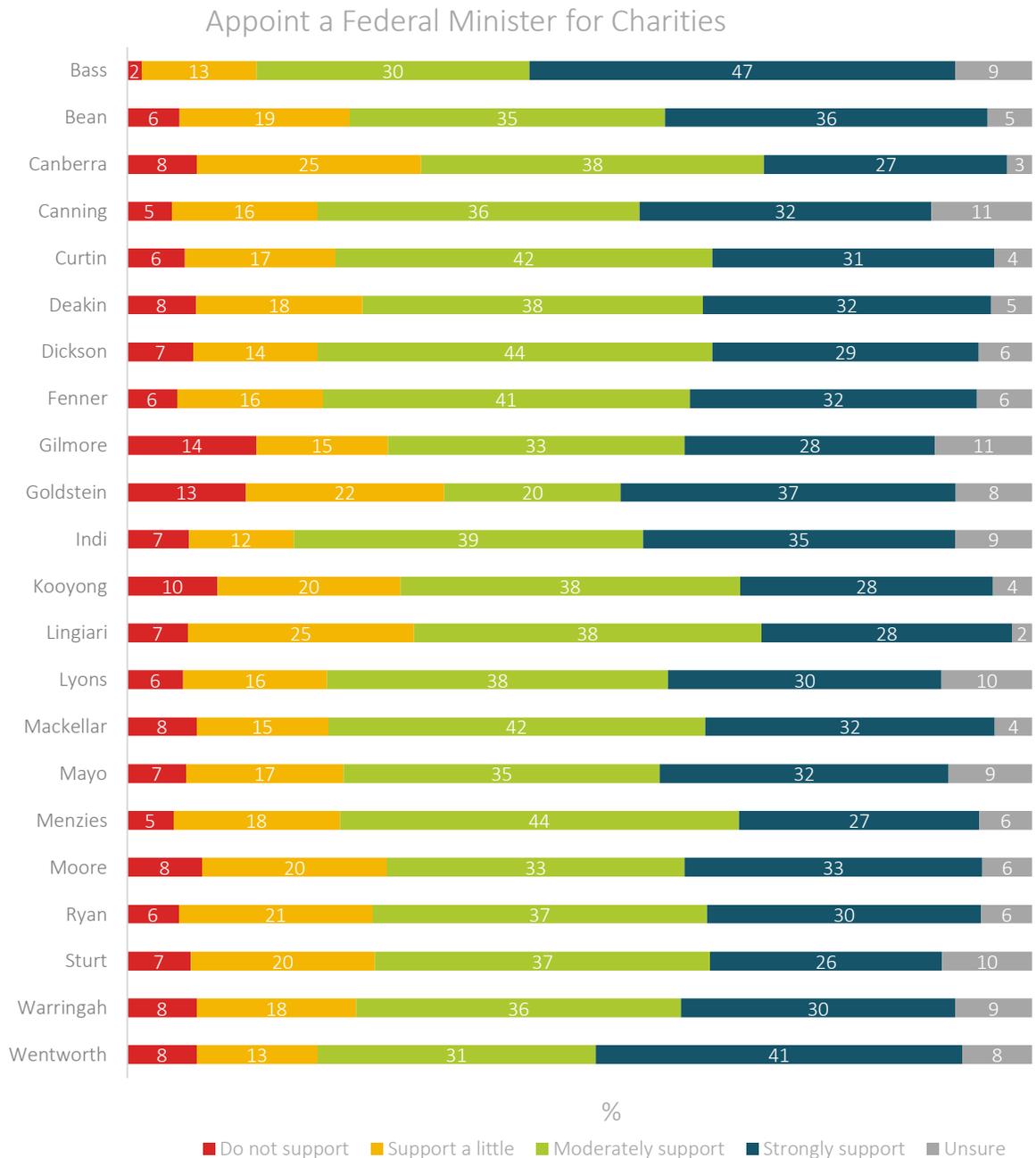


Communities in surveyed electorates show strong support for their local MPs taking action to achieve key goals for Australian charities. Across all measures, a clear majority (86% to 92%) support these actions. The highest levels of moderate to strong support are seen for making all donations to registered charities tax deductible (81%) and for fully implementing an industry plan to strengthen charity operations (79%). Appointing a Federal Minister for Charities also receives substantial backing with 68% strongly or moderately supporting this. Overall, the data indicates broad and consistent public endorsement for greater government action and leadership in supporting the charity sector.

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

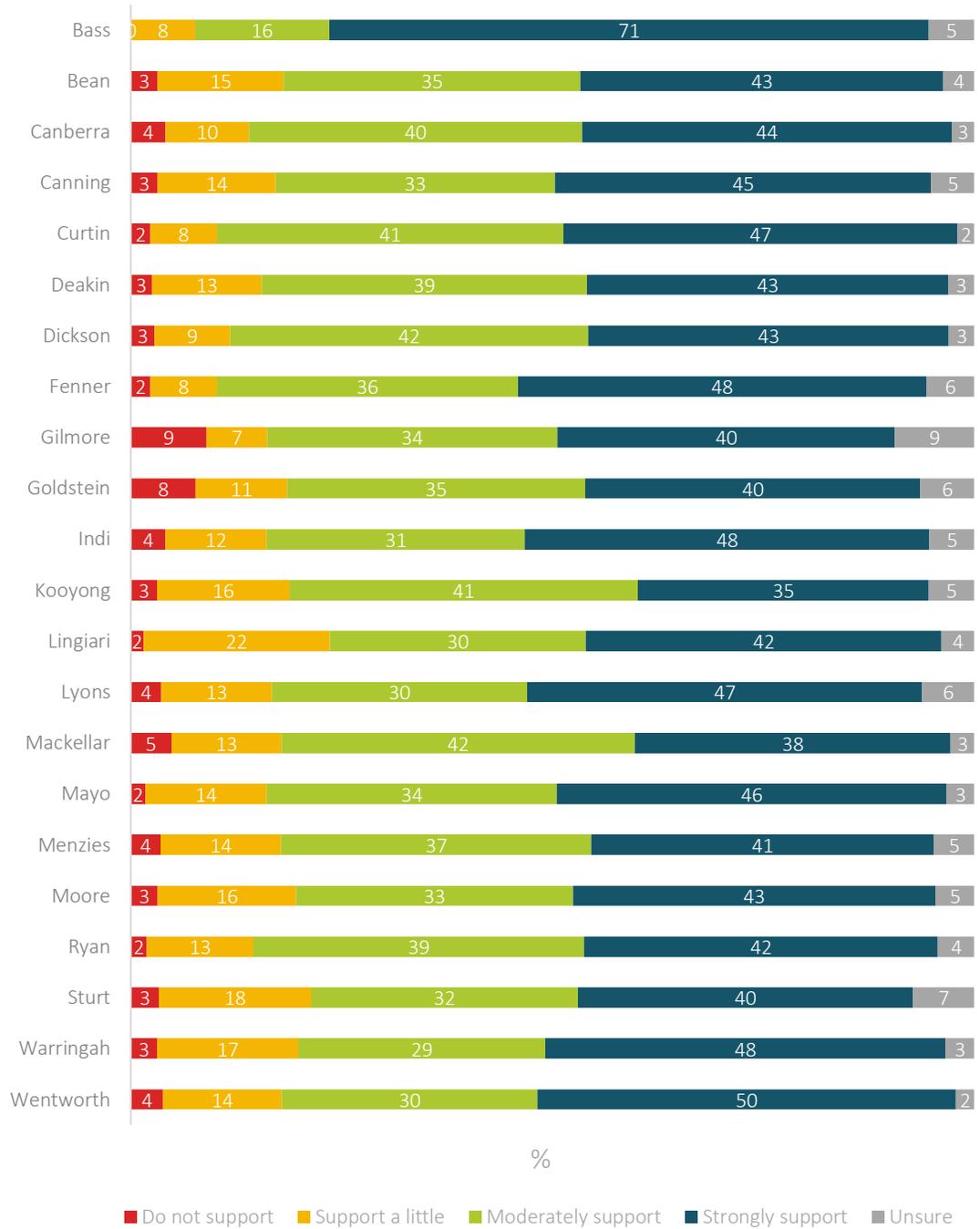
How strongly would you support your local member of parliament achieving the following goals for Australian Charities? (By Electorate.)

Results regarding support for local MPs achieving key goals were consistent across electorates with most electors supporting more action across all key goals.



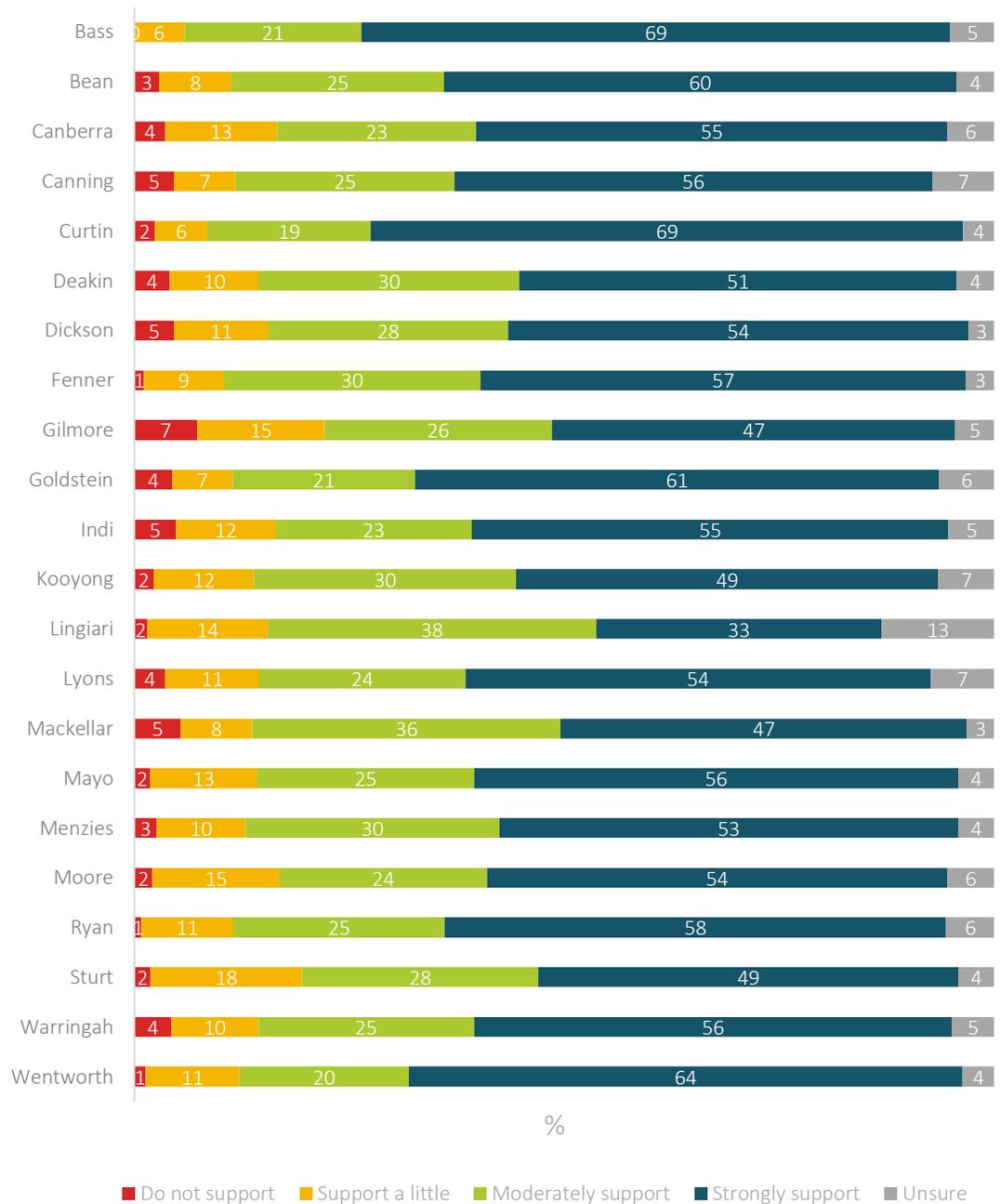
Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

Fully implement an industry plan so charities have the staff, volunteers and capacity to offer better services



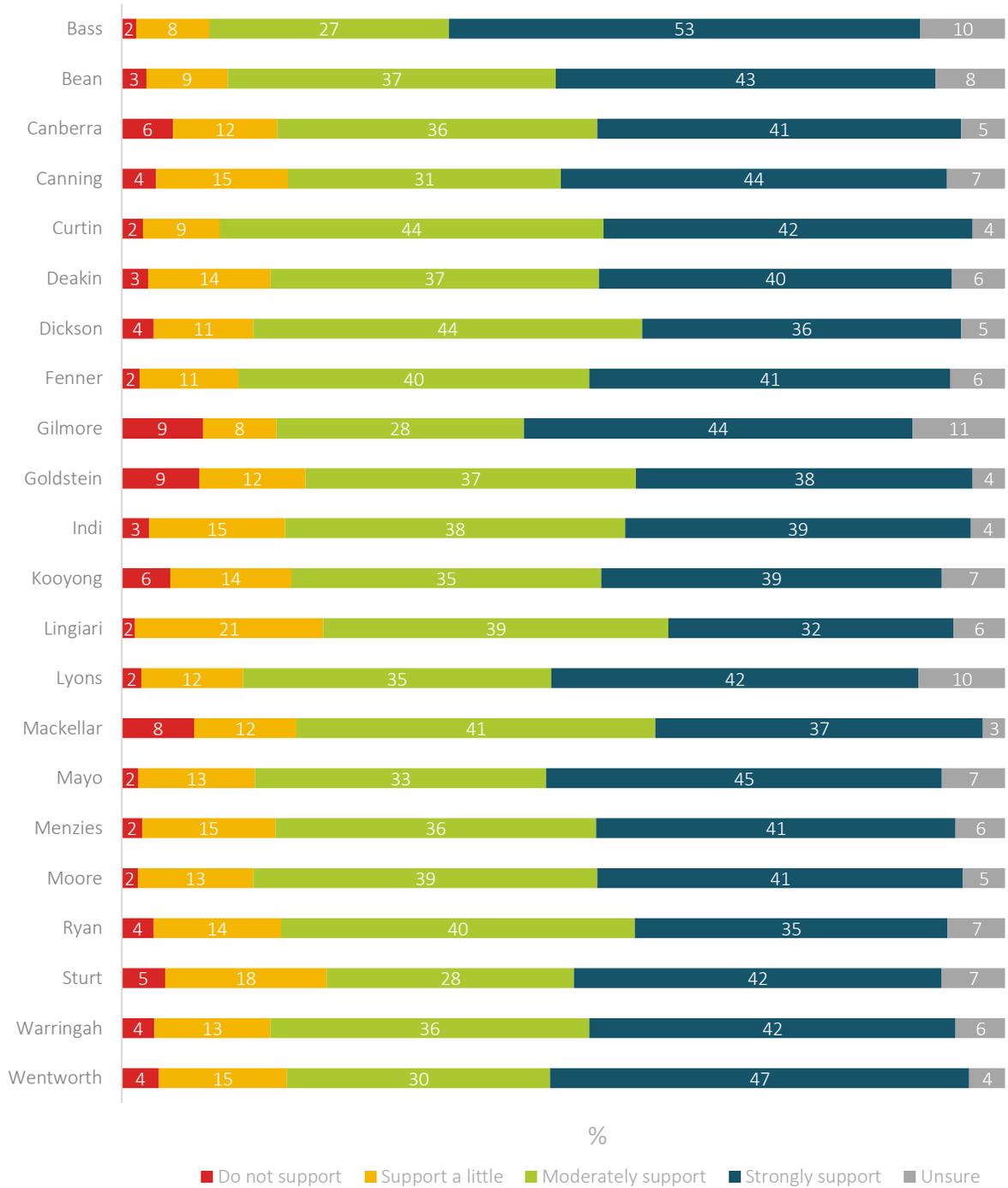
Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

Make it easier for people to give to charities - allow all donations to registered charities to be tax deductible



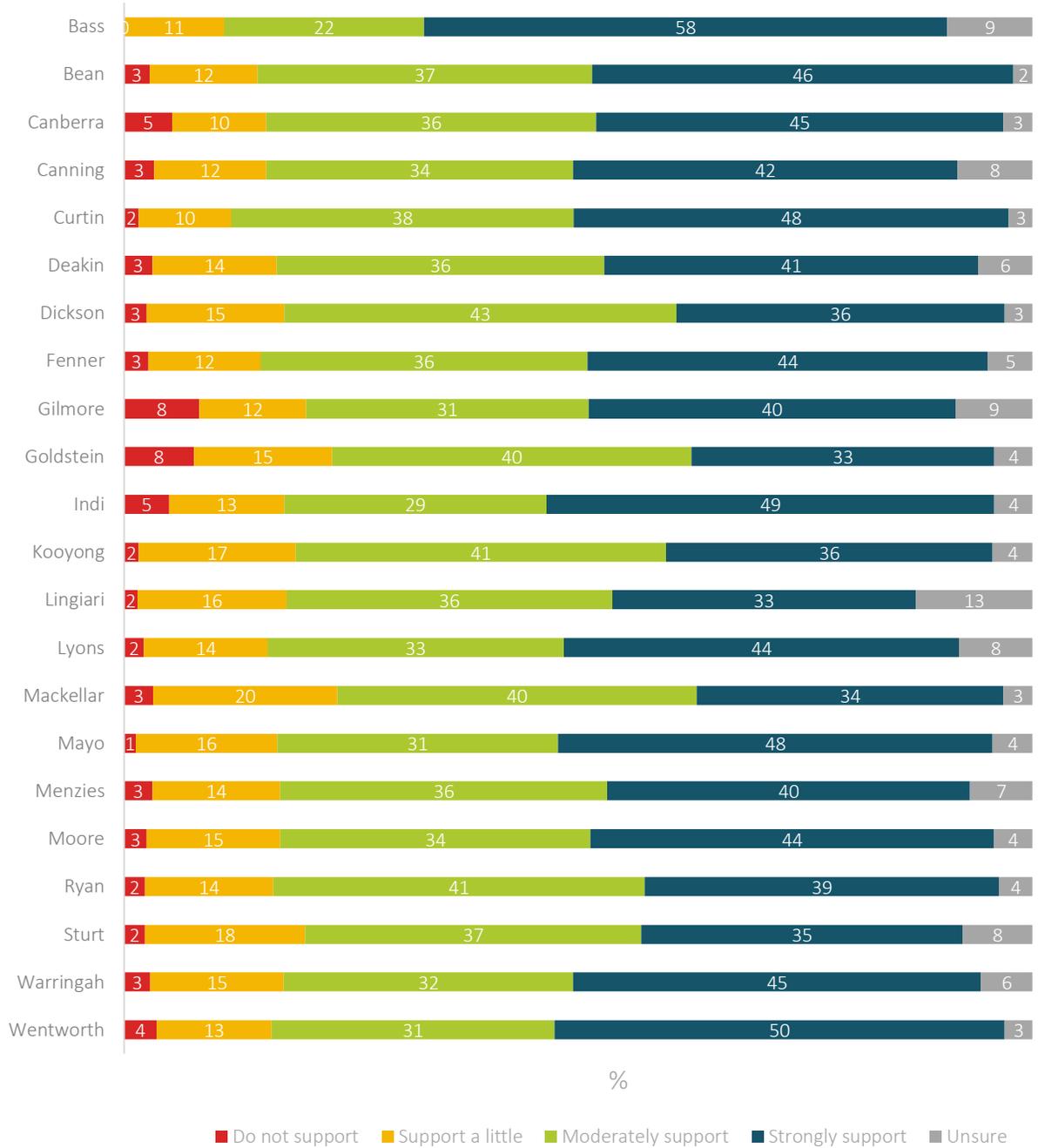
Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

Offer more government support to charities to drive major reforms (environment, emergency services, digital economy)



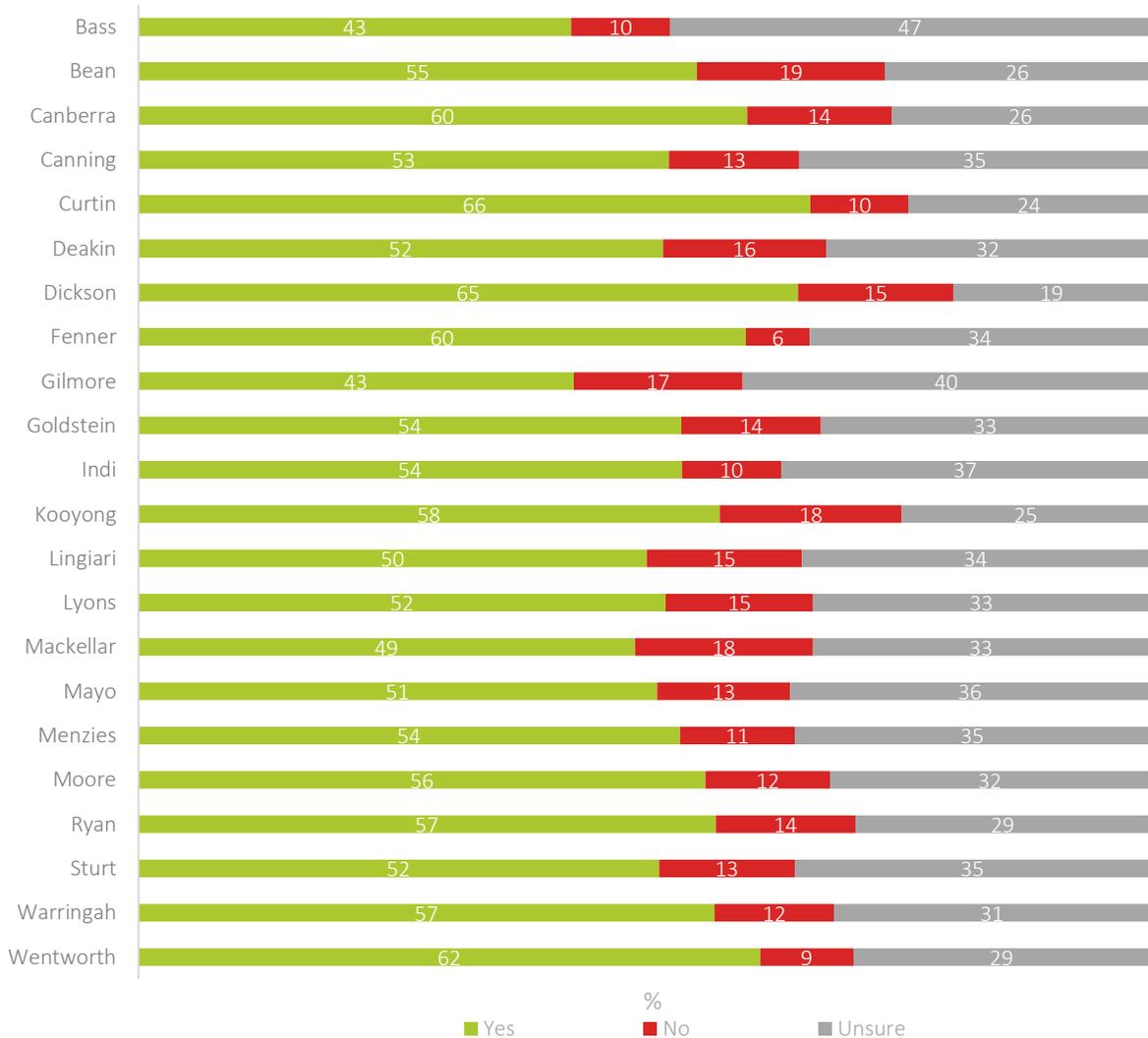
Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

Include experienced and knowledgeable charities in the Government's planning and policy priorities



Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

Are you more likely to vote for an election candidate who can help improve government policy in a way that helps charities?

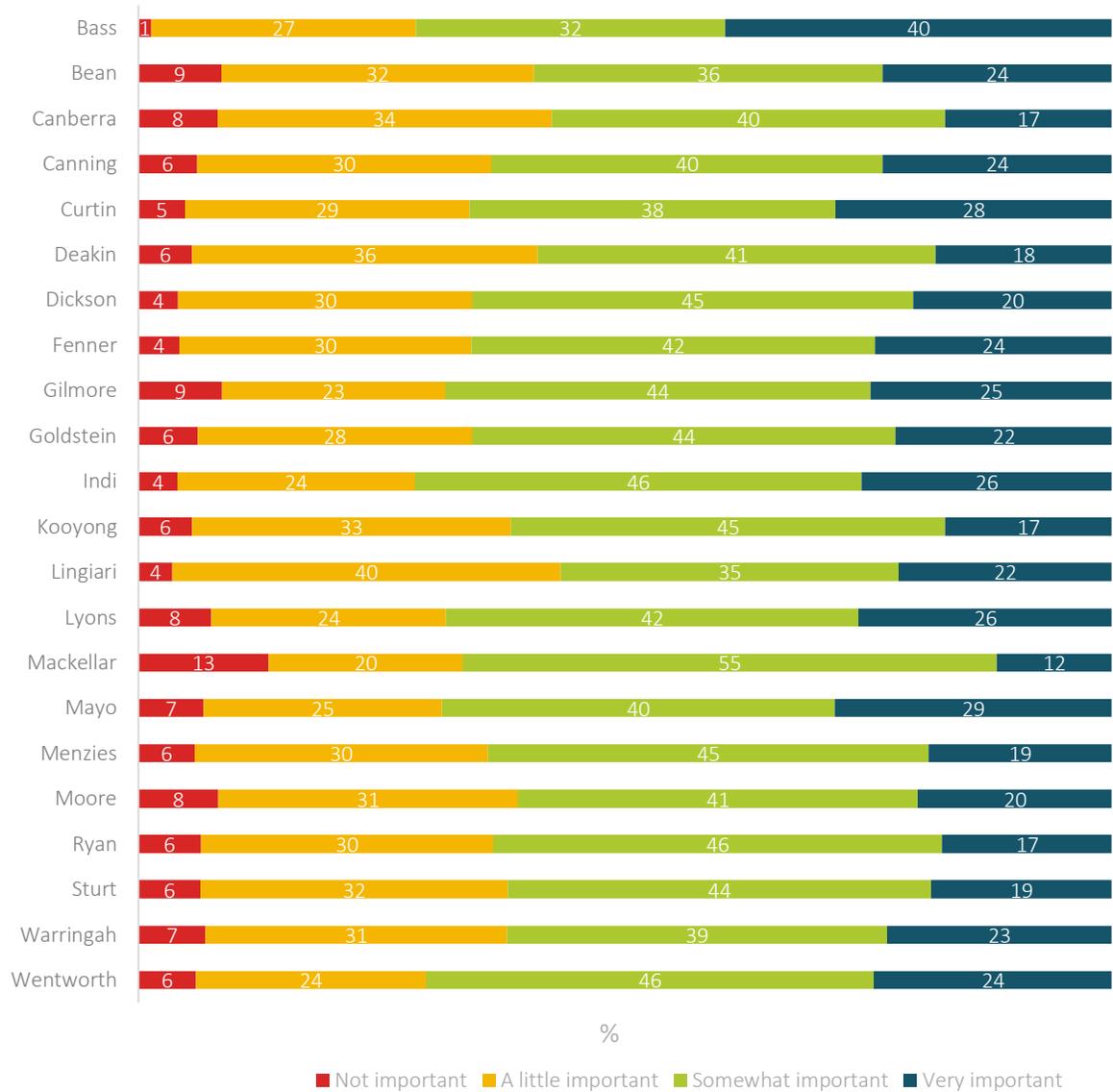


In Australia, a marginal seat is one where the incumbent's victory margin is less than 6%, indicating a higher susceptibility to change in elections.

The survey data indicates a significant proportion of electors in marginal electorates are willing to support candidates who advocate for improved government policies for charities. This suggests potential electoral challenges for incumbents as even minor shifts in voter preferences can alter election outcomes. Incumbent candidates may need to align their platforms with their electorate's priorities concerning charity sector support. Active engagement with the sector and their responsiveness to the concerns of charities can enhance the incumbent's appeal.

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

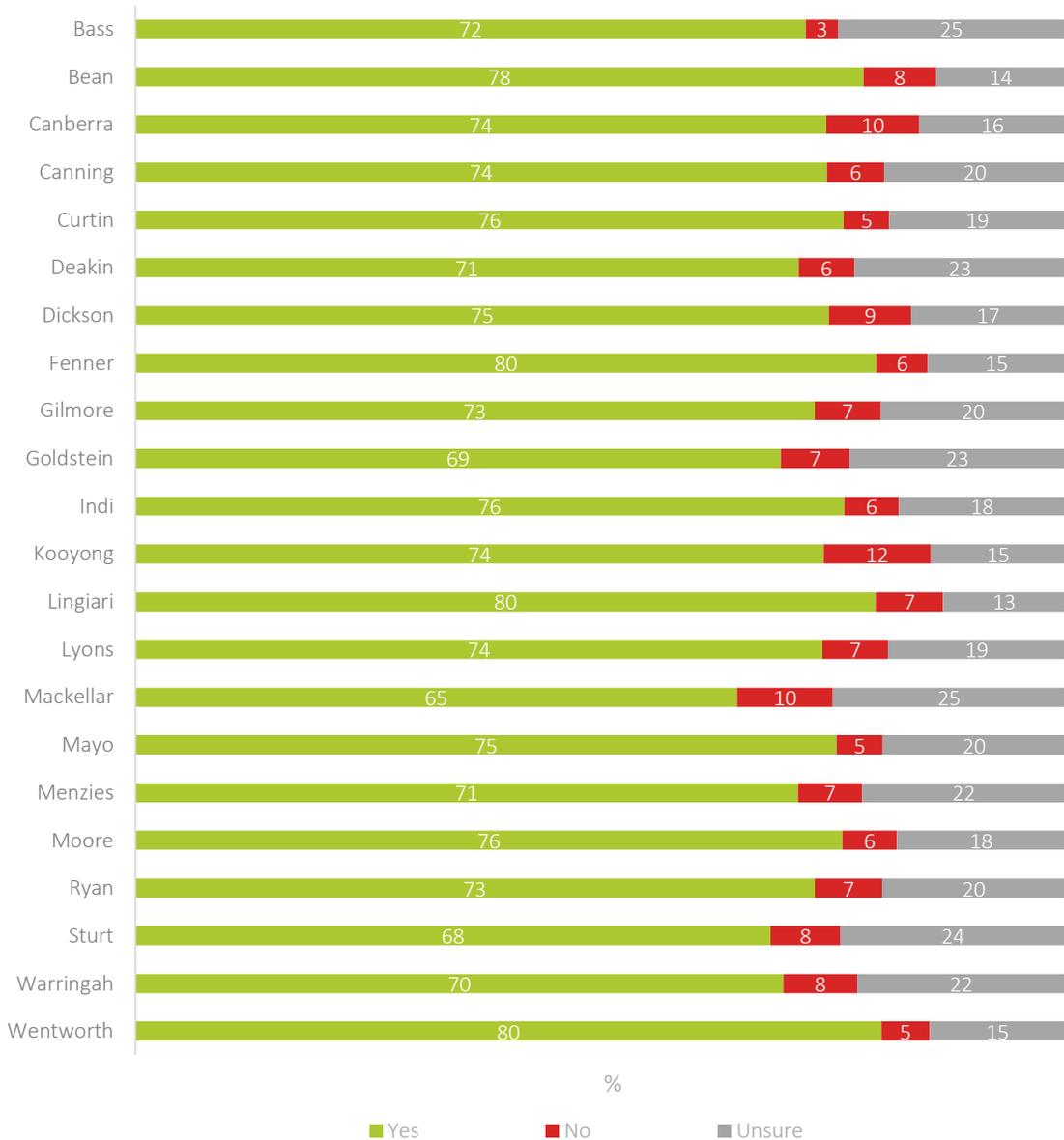
How important is it that your local member of parliament takes more action to get the Australian Government to work closer with charities to help the Australian Community?



The overall trend from this data shows strong support across marginal electorates for local MPs to take more action to encourage the Australian Government to work closely with charities. In almost all marginal electorates, the majority of respondents rate this as either somewhat important or very important, with combined scores typically exceeding 70%. In the context of the upcoming Federal election, these findings reinforce that charity policy and government engagement with the sector could be influential factors for voters, particularly in closely contested electorates.

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

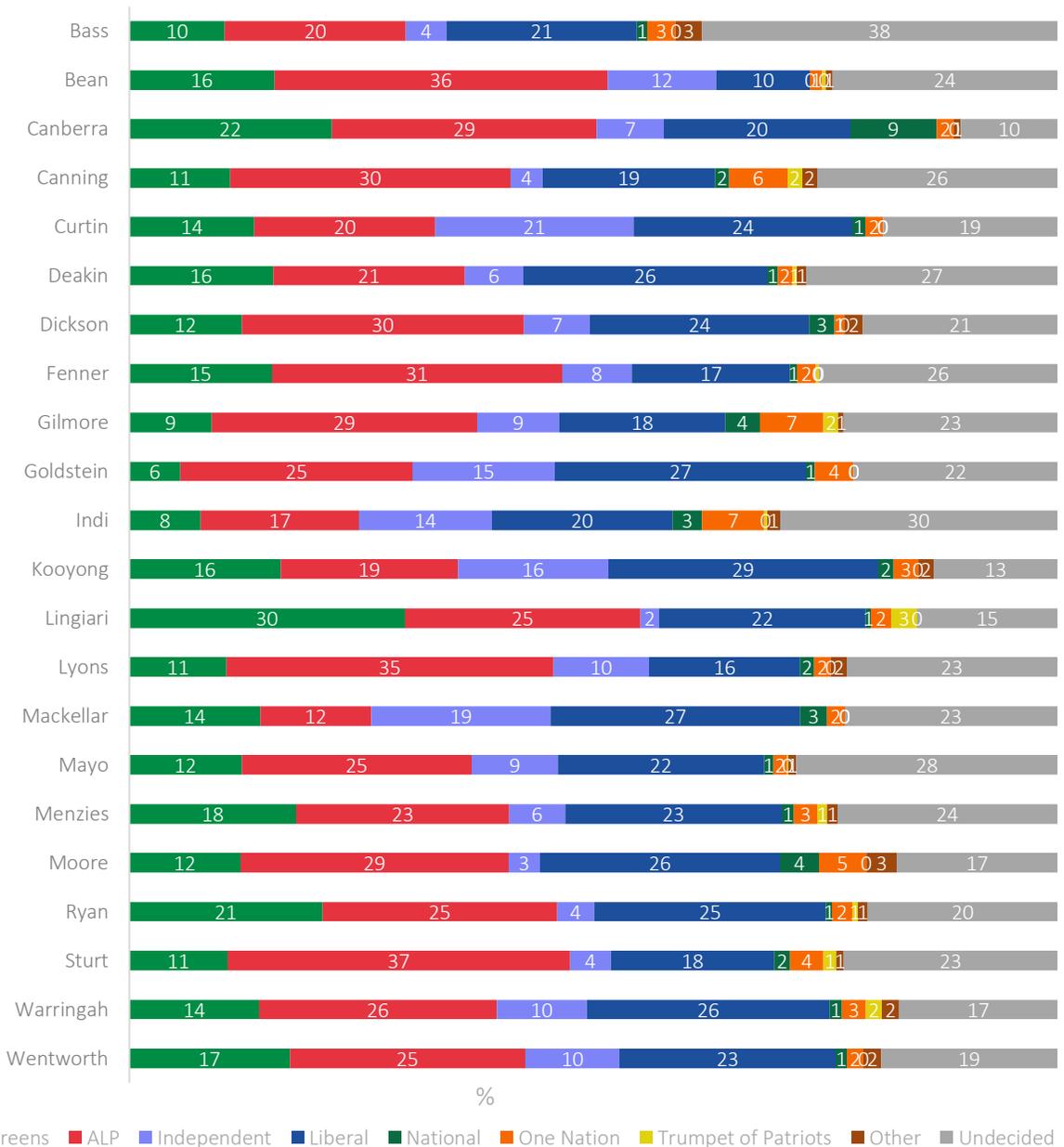
Would you like to see your local member of parliament meet with charity sector representatives (like the Community Council for Australia) to improve Government policy for charities in Australia?



In almost all electorates, 70% or more of respondents want their local MP to meet with Charity Sector organisations like the Community Council for Australia. Again, this highlights a clear public expectation for political leaders to collaborate closely with the charity sector and signals that engagement could be a key issue influencing voter sentiment.

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

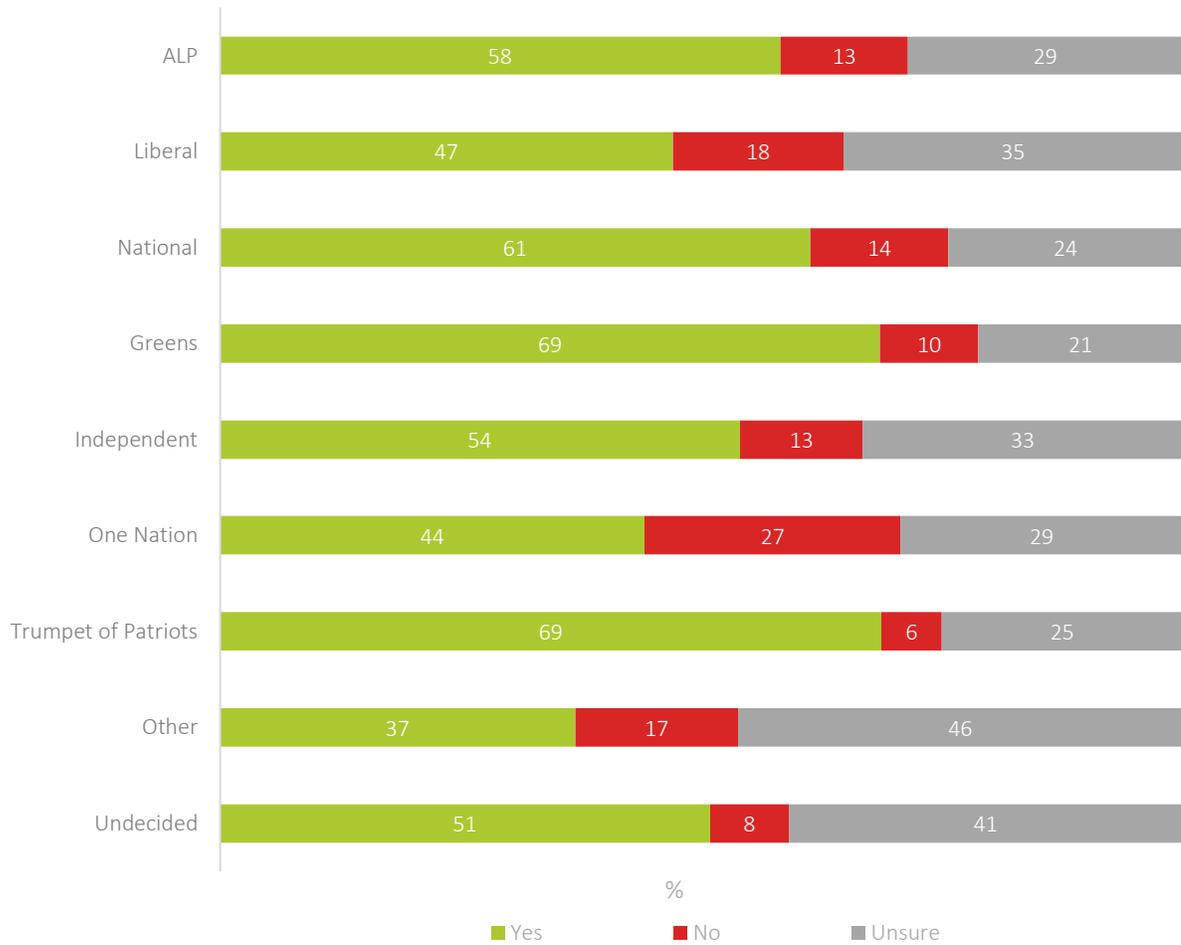
In the upcoming Federal election who do you think you're most likely to vote for?



The survey results, combined with recent Australian electoral polling data, show a competitive electoral environment particularly in Australia's marginal electorates. Candidates must remain attuned to constituents' evolving priorities, including policies affecting the charity sector. Engaging proactively with these issues could be pivotal in securing voter support in the upcoming federal election.

Community Perceptions Survey (Charities)

Breakdown of voter types by likelihood of voting for an election candidate who can help improve government policy in a way that helps charities.



When examined by most likely voting intentions at the next election, alignment with all political parties show strong levels of support for candidates who can improve Government policy in a way that helps charities. Out of the two leading parties, 47% of prospective Liberal voters and 58% of prospective Labor voters support candidates who want to improve charity policy.

Candidates from most parties (especially ALP, Nationals, Greens, and Independents) have an incentive to visibly champion charity sector reforms and collaboration. For parties with lower current alignment (such as Liberal and One Nation), practical support for charities could still attract voters from the high proportions of undecided voters in marginal electorates.

Attachment 1. Demographics of Sample

Respondent count by electorate (unweighted)

Electorate	Count
Bass	48
Bean	136
Canberra	156
Canning	366
Curtin	97
Deakin	241
Dickson	111
Fenner	275
Gilmore	174
Goldstein	90
Indi	146
Kooyong	224
Lingiari	38
Lyons	337
Mackellar	101
Mayo	334
Menzies	384
Moore	220
Ryan	337
Sturt	286
Warringah	263
Wentworth	235

For the 95% confidence interval, responses across electorates provide results accurate to within a margin of error of between +/- 5% to 10% for most electorates, providing generally reliable results. Bass, (+/-14%) and Lingiari (+/-16%) have higher margins of error due to smaller samples. Use results for these two electorates with greater caution.

Respondent age (unweighted)

Respondent Age Group	Count	Percentage
18 to 24	755	16.4
25 to 34	1180	25.6
35 to 44	1070	23.3
45 to 54	652	14.2
55 to 64	452	9.8
65 to 74	334	7.3
75 to 84	147	3.2
85 or older	11	0.2

The majority of electors surveyed were between 18 – 64 (89%).

Respondent gender (Unweighted)

Respondent Gender	Count	Percentage
Woman or female	3091	67.2
Man or male	1481	32.2
Non-binary	25	0.5
Prefer not to answer	4	0.1

Electors identifying as women or female (67%) returned the majority of responses, double that of men or males (32%). This gender skew is typical of many voluntary community surveys.

Skews in the collected data have been corrected using post-stratification weighting (or cell weighting) based on gender, age group, income levels and electorate population. This adjusts each respondent's influence on the results in this report to ensure the sample distribution matches the Australian Bureau of Statistics population distribution to provide reliable results.

This report was produced by Piazza Research Pty Ltd for The Community Council for Australia

Lead Consultants: Mathilde Lamerton, Grant Piazza