



Public support for policy trials in Australia

CPMD Workshop on Banking, Health and
Education

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- Growing view that RCTs are used far less within public policy development than they could and should be.
- Little evidence on the views of the public on RCTs (or policy trials more broadly)
- To build an evidence based we conducted a population-based survey experiment (26th ANUPoll).

- **Recruitment**

- Dual-frame RDD (70% mobile frame / 30% landline frame)
- National probability proportional to size sample design
- Trialled different recruitment methods (combinations of incentives, materials, one and two-stage recruitment)

- **Response maximisation**

- Non-contingent incentive
- Extended routine / Reminders

- **Panel member**

- 3-week enumeration
- Multiple reminders (email, SMS, calls)

- **Panel dimensions**

- n=3,322
- Aged 18 years and over
- Online and offline population
- English-speaking

- **Panel maintenance**

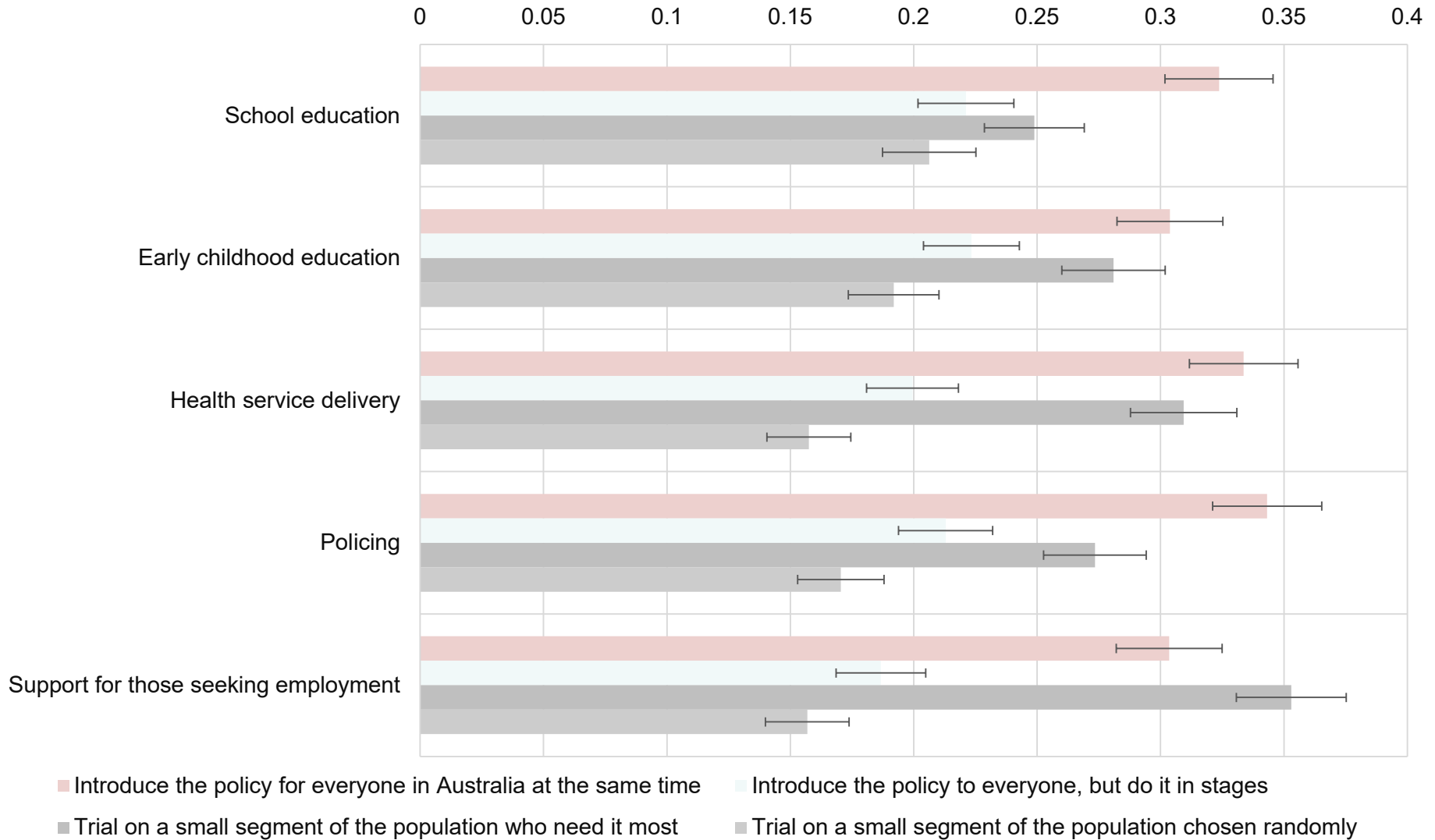
- Sample top up via a single –frame mobile phone survey

Please consider a hypothetical [Labor Party/Liberal Party/blank] proposal to reform <INSERT PORTFOLIO AREA>. If experts in the area [generally support/are generally opposed to/are divided on] the policy, which of the following approaches do you think the [Labor/Liberal/blank] government should take?

- Introduce the policy for everyone in Australia at the same time.
- Introduce the policy to everyone, but do it in stages.
- Trial on a small segment of the population who need it most.
- Trial on a small segment of the population chosen randomly.



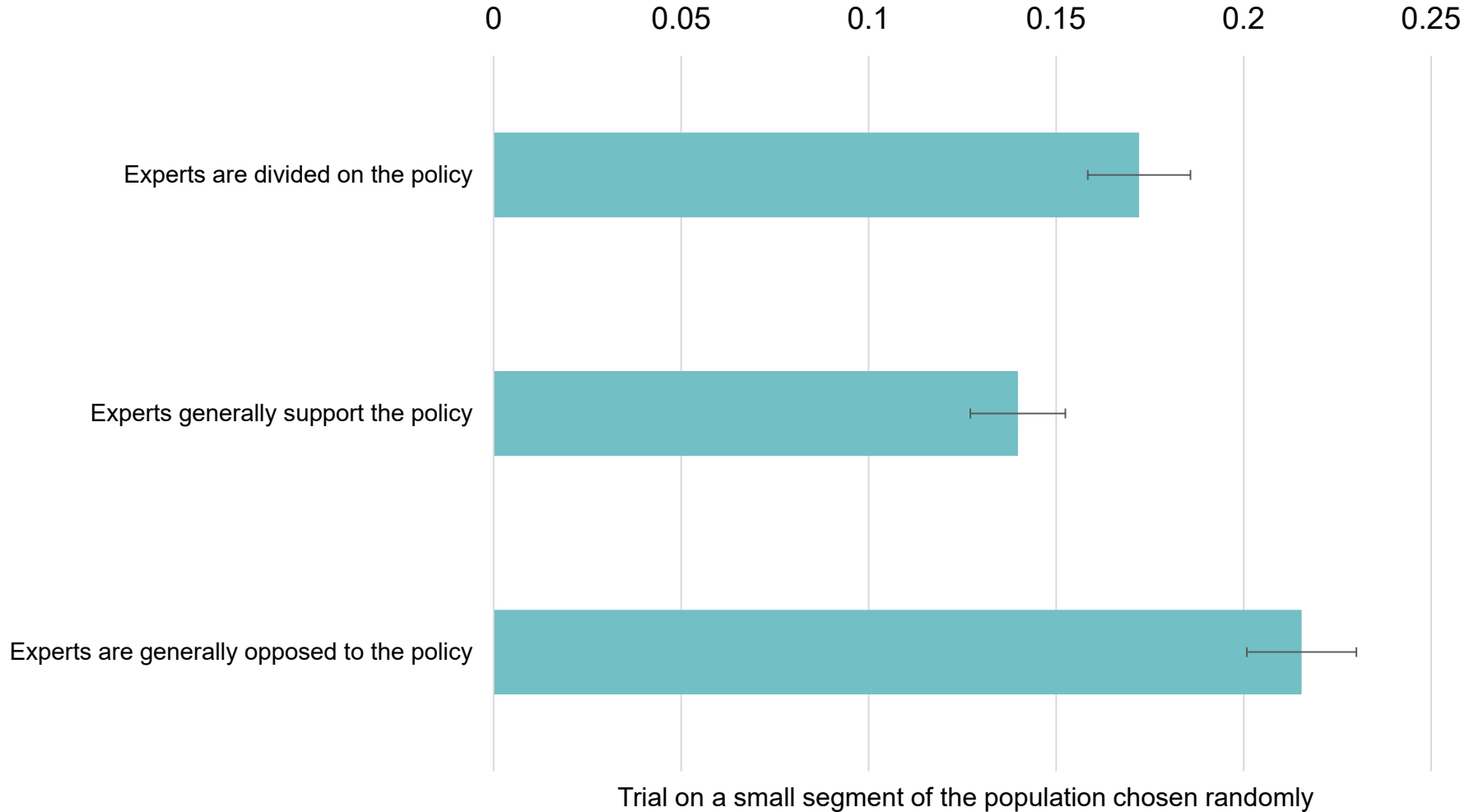
Which approaches should the government take for a hypothetical policy reform



Predictors of support for trials

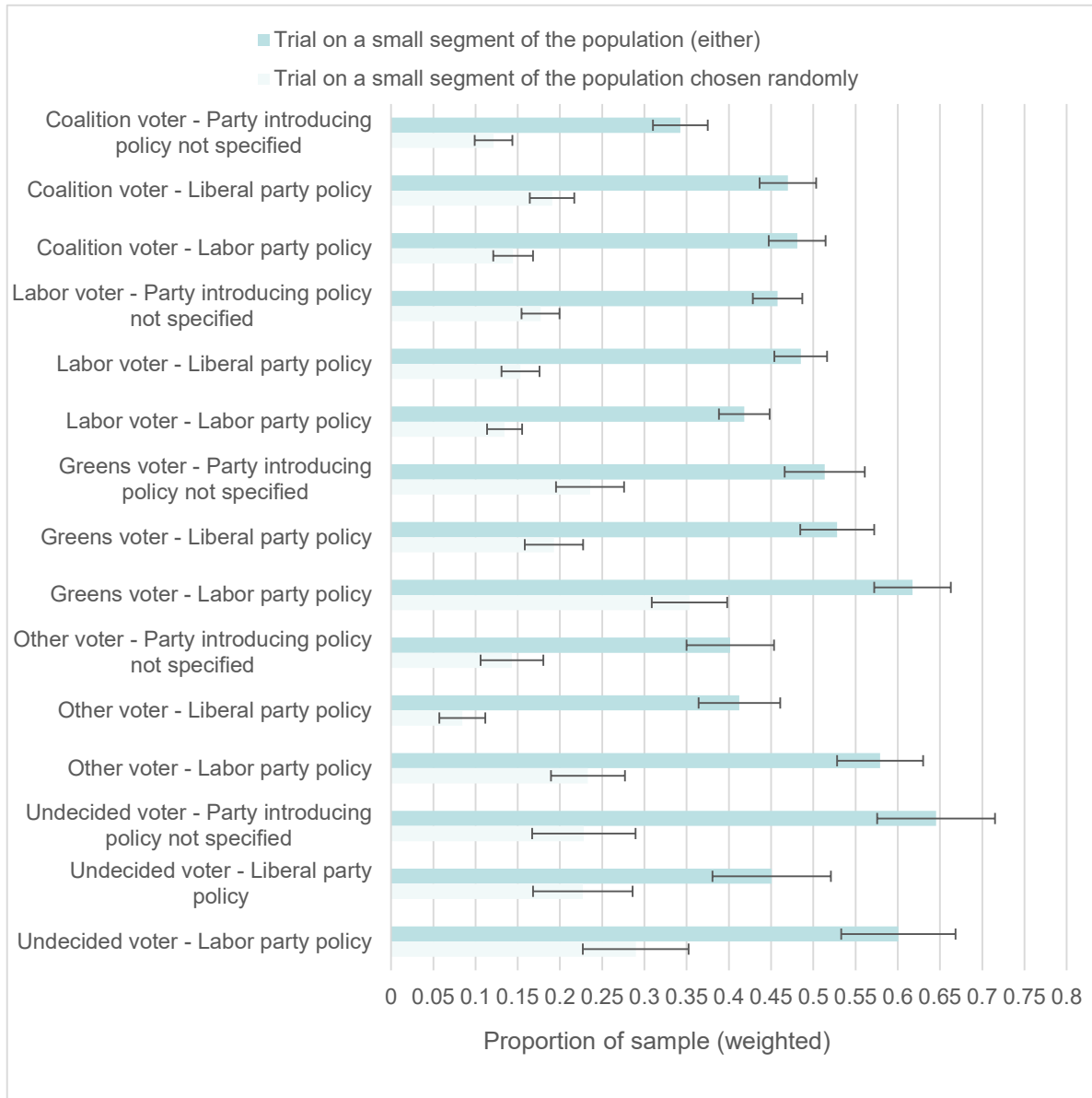
- Regression approach – pool responses to all five areas – use Random Effects Probit
- People with low levels of education, born overseas in a non-English speaking country, and live in low socioeconomic status areas have the lowest levels of support for trials in general and RCTs in particular
- No differences by gender, age, and geographic remoteness

Variation in support by views of the experts

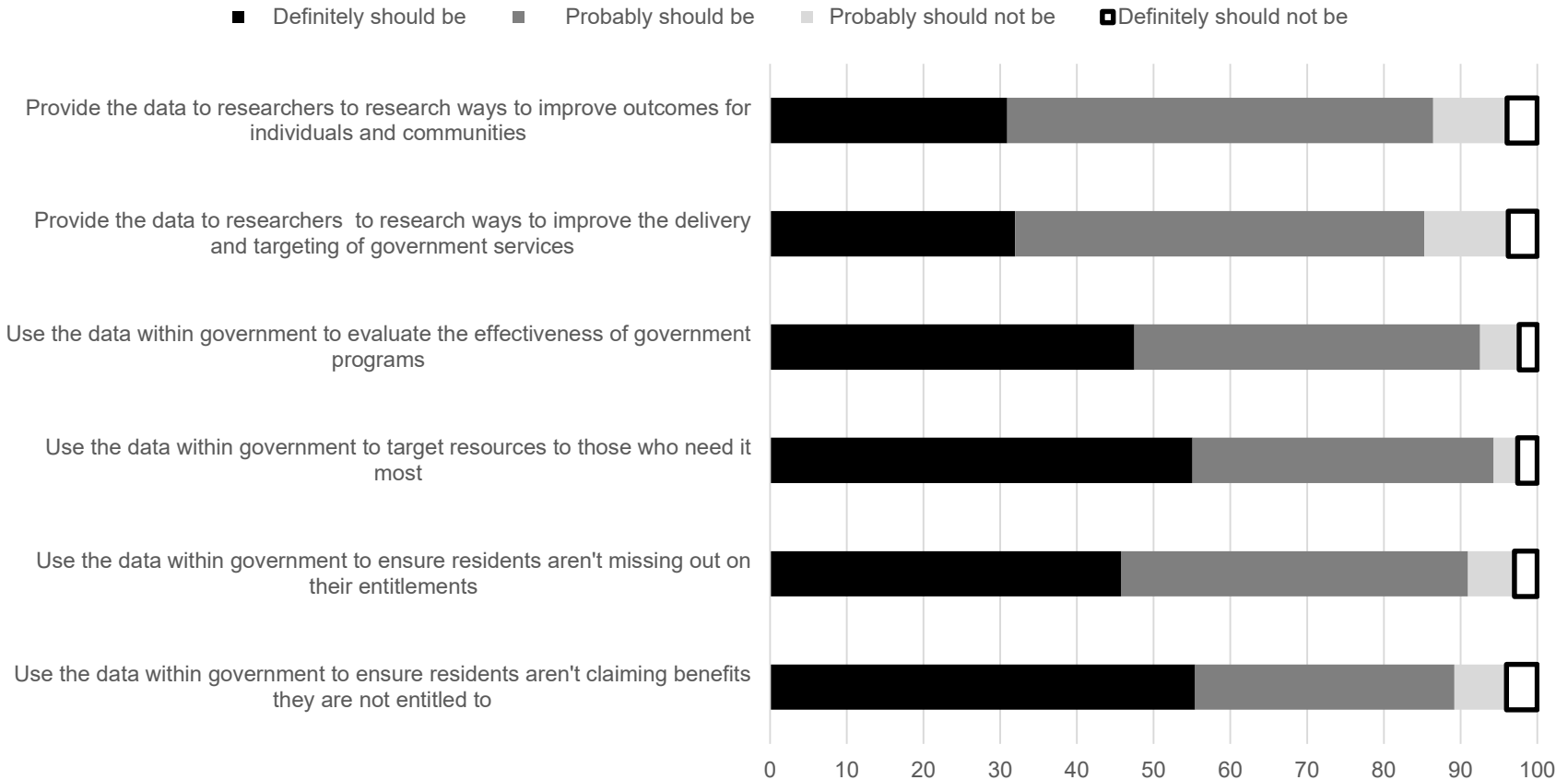




Support ofr government trials by voting intention and party proposing the policy

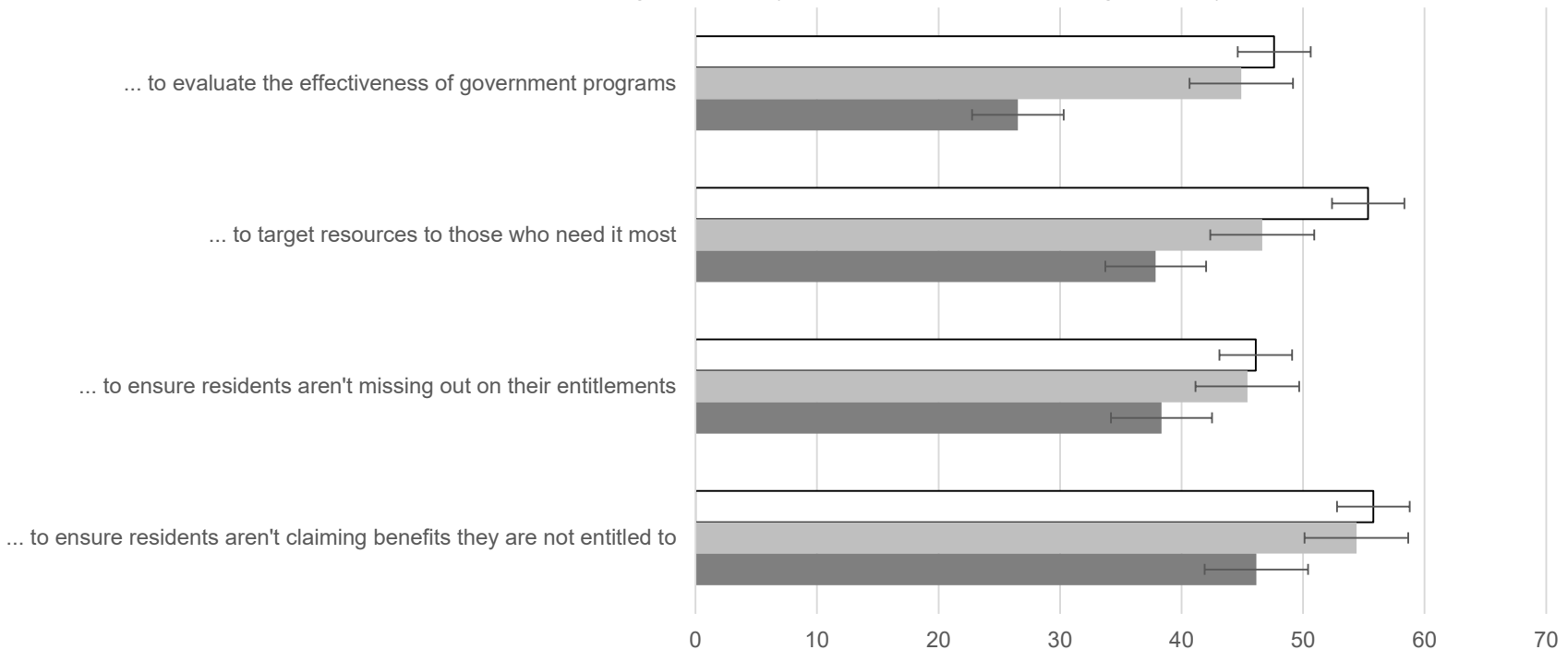


Do you think the Commonwealth Government should or should not be able to...?



Do you think the Commonwealth Government definitely should be able to ... , by method of usage.

- Use the data within government ...
- Share data across government departments ...
- Combine data across a range of sources (also known as linked data or integrated data) ...



Banerjee and Duflo (2011): ‘If we resist the kind of lazy, formulaic thinking that reduces every problem to the same set of general principles; if we listen to poor people themselves and force ourselves to understand the logic of their choices; if we accept the possibility of error and subject every idea, including the most apparently commonsensical ones, to rigorous empirical testing, then we will be better able not only to construct a toolbox of effective policies but also to better understand why the poor live the way they do.’

Drawn from

Biddle, N., and Gray, M., (Forthcoming) ‘Support for policy trials in Australia: Level and predictors’ *ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods, Methods Paper Series.*

Biddle, B., Edwards, B., Gray, M. and McEachern. S. (Forthcoming) ‘Public attitudes towards data governance in Australia ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods, Methods Paper Series.



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