

Australia-China Relations
Institute
澳中关系研究院



UTS:ACRI/BIDA Poll 2024

The Australia–China
relationship: What do
Australians think?

Elena Collinson and Paul Burke
June 2024

The Australia–China Relations Institute (ACRI) is an independent, non-partisan research institute based at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). UTS:ACRI’s mission is to inform Australia’s engagement with China through substantive dialogue, and research and analysis grounded in scholarly rigour.

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Published by

Australia–China Relations Institute
University of Technology Sydney
PO Box 123
Broadway NSW 2007
Australia

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ISBN 978-0-6459176-1-1

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Introduction and executive summary



Now in its fourth year, the *UTS:ACRI/BIDA Poll* continues to provide policymakers and the public with a set of comprehensive insights into how Australians approach what is unquestionably Australia's toughest foreign policy challenge in generations, the Australia-China relationship.

This year's results again reveal just how deep Australians' mistrust of China continues to be. The result is not surprising: recent experience with China's economic coercion and wolf warrior diplomacy can hardly be expected to be forgotten, even as Beijing's punitive tariffs on Australian exports are gradually released and dialogue has resumed at the leadership level. A growing number of Australians believe that either the US or China will force the country to choose between close relations with Washington or Beijing, but they are relatively evenly split on which of the great powers will force the issue. Another Trump presidency is deemed likely to render that dilemma more acute.

That half of those polled believe a conflict with China is a 'serious possibility' in the next three years serves as testament to how deeply rooted is the national anxiety about China. Such a sentiment is unlikely to dissipate as countries like Australia, and others, continue to wrestle with the nature of China's military power and its strategic intentions. There is a perception, though, that US regional influence is growing.

Although some believe the bilateral relationship may improve somewhat over coming years, more generally Australians continue to adopt a guarded stance towards relations with Beijing. They are still content to reap the benefits of the economic relationship and cultivate business ties – though even faith in these dimensions is diminishing. Nearly three-quarters of those polled see Australia as too economically reliant on China and the nexus between the relationship and underlying Australian economic prosperity shows mild signs of strain.

Overall, Australians remain strongly wary of and concerned by Xi Jinping's more assertive foreign policy, particularly in the areas of foreign interference, espionage and the use of social media and communications platforms such as TikTok and WeChat. Half of those polled support higher defence spending, even if that means budget cuts in other portfolios. Support for AUKUS is inching up even as the Australia-China relationship is viewed as a net positive for regional stability and as support for a containment strategy slips.

And the number of those who believe Canberra should remain neutral in any military contingency over Taiwan where the US is militarily engaged fell to 43 percent, down six points from 49 percent last year. Washington policymakers will be keenly watching that number now and into the future.

The poll does not necessarily award high marks to the governing Labor Party for its policy of 'stabilisation' of relations with China, though it does register relatively strong support for the two countries discussing their differences via traditional diplomacy, not by picking up the megaphone.

The gap that opened up in 2023 between support for the Australian Labor Party and support for the Liberal/National coalition as the best placed to handle Australia's China policy seems to be closing this year. Forty percent of Australians nominated the Australian Labor Party as the political party best placed to handle Australia's China policy, down from 49 percent in 2023. Thirty-four percent said the Liberal/National coalition is best placed to handle Australia's China policy, up from 29 percent last year. This perhaps indicates that on some incidents the public wants a stronger government response.

The public may well be registering that when it comes to the Albanese government's formula for the relationship – 'cooperate where we can, disagree where we must' – it is hearing much more the former than the latter from its political leaders. They continue to want a tougher stance, including sanctions on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights violations.

Still, this improved climate in political relations continues to witness concern about tensions negatively affecting Australians of Chinese origin continuing to fall. At the same time, over 40 percent of those polled believe that Beijing will be able to mobilise its diaspora in Australia to undermine national interests and social cohesion.

A selection of results from the *UTS:ACRI/BIDA Poll 2024* are included below.

1. Overall views on the Australia–China relationship

- **Building stronger connections and ties, and a strong relationship:** Six in 10 Australians (61 percent) believe that Australia should continue to try to build strong connections and ties, and have a strong relationship with China. Support for this sentiment has remained more or less unchanged since the launch of the first *UTS:ACRI/BIDA Poll* four years ago, remaining stable as political tensions have waxed and, tentatively, waned.
- **Concerns:** Concerns about Australia’s relationship with China remain high but have steadily decreased over the last four years. In 2024, 64 percent of Australians expressed concerns, a 10-point decrease from a high of 74 percent in 2021.
- **Benefits:** Even as Australians identified concerns about the Australia–China relationship, they identified benefits in parallel. This year, 62 percent of Australians said they see the benefits of Australia’s relationship with China, a sentiment that has remained relatively steady over four years, albeit with a dip in 2022 (58 percent).
- **Mistrust of the Chinese government:** A majority of Australians (71 percent) expressed mistrust of the Chinese government. This sentiment has remained high over four years – consistently at 70 percent or over – although this year’s sentiment is still slightly down from a high of 76 percent in 2021.
- **The Australian government’s management of China relations:** Australians’ perceptions of the Australian government’s performance with respect to China relations remain more or less unchanged from last year. Four in 10 Australians (40 percent) expressed satisfaction with the Albanese government’s management of China relations, a continuation of sentiment from 2023 (39 percent). This represents a slight uptick from views regarding the Morrison government’s performance with respect to China relations, with 34 percent having expressed satisfaction in 2022 and 32 percent in 2021.
- **A harder Australian government line on China:** Nearly six in 10 Australians expressed support

for the Australian government adopting a harder line in its dealings with China. This sentiment is creeping up again after incrementally but steadily decreasing after a four-year high in 2021 (63 percent) to a low in 2023 (55 percent).

- **Responsibility for improving the Australia–China relationship:** A clear majority of Australians (79 percent) agreed that ‘The responsibility for improving the relationship between Australia and China lies with both countries’, a continuation of views expressed in 2023 (78 percent), 2022 (78 percent) and 2021 (80 percent).

However, more Australians believe that the responsibility lies with China (48 percent) rather than Australia (31 percent).

- **Future outlook:** While Australians’ views about the short- to medium-term prospects for improvement in relations between Australia and China remain pessimistic overall, there has been an incremental increase in optimism regarding improvement over the last four years. This year, one-third of Australians (33 percent) said that they believe bilateral relations ‘will improve in the next three years’, a six-point increase from a low of 27 percent in 2021.

2. Politics and political communication

- **Political party best placed to handle Australia’s China policy:** The view that the Australian Labor Party is best placed to handle Australia’s China policy is less pronounced this year, with the Liberal/National coalition closing the gap that had opened up in 2023.

Four in 10 Australians (40 percent) nominated the Australian Labor Party as the political party best placed to handle Australia’s China policy. This reflects a nine-point decrease from 2023 (49 percent), although this is still up from a pre-election low of 35 percent in 2022.

Thirty-four percent of Australians said the Liberal/National coalition is best placed to handle Australia’s China policy, a five-point increase from 2023 (29 percent), inching back to its high of 36 percent going into the 2022 federal election.

- **Management of Australia’s China policy and impact on upcoming federal election vote:** Australians are fairly evenly split on whether management of China policy will be an issue that will impact on their vote at the next federal election. Although, a slightly higher proportion of respondents said that they would factor the issue into their voting considerations (35 percent), compared with respondents who said they would not factor the issue in (29 percent).

- **Communication over areas of disagreement:** Just over six in 10 Australians (61 percent) said that ‘The Australian government’s disputes with the Chinese government are better communicated through diplomatic channels rather than public statements’. This majority view that communication of disputes via diplomatic channels is preferable to public statements has remained relatively steady over the last four years.

Older Australians aged 55+ (71 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (50 percent) were less likely to agree.

Australians who voted for the Australian Labor Party (69 percent) at the 2022 federal election were also more likely to agree.

increase defence spending, to balance, among other considerations, China’s growing military might’. While support remains high, the last three years have seen a steady drop in agreement with this view – 67 percent had expressed agreement in 2023 and 70 percent in 2022.

Older Australians aged 55+ (78 percent) and Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (73 percent) were more likely to agree.

When asked, however, whether the Australian government is right to increase defence spending ‘even if it means budget cuts in other areas’, support for such an increase dropped slightly, with half of Australians (53 percent) agreeing. However, a slightly higher proportion this year supported an increase in defence spending notwithstanding budget cuts in other areas, reflecting a three-point increase from agreement with the view in 2023 (50 percent).

- **Acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS:** Nearly half of Australians (48 percent) agreed that ‘The Australian government’s plan to acquire nuclear submarines under the Australia–UK–US (AUKUS) trilateral security partnership will help keep Australia secure from a military threat from China’, a four-point increase from when the view was first measured in 2023 (44 percent).

Victoria residents (71 percent) were significantly more likely to agree, while Australian Capital Territory residents (29 percent) were significantly less likely to agree.

- **Forming trade and security blocs that exclude China:** Just over four in 10 Australians (43 percent) said that ‘Australia should form trade and security blocs with other countries that deliberately exclude China’, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years.
- **Regional stability and security:** Just over half of Australians (53 percent) said that ‘Australia’s relationship with China contributes to regional stability and security’, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years.
- **Conflict over Taiwan:** Over the last three years, Australians have remained fairly evenly split between agreeing and disagreeing with the

3. Military and security

- **China as a security threat:** Nearly three-quarters of Australians (71 percent) said that ‘China is a security threat to Australia’, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed in 2023 (72 percent) and 2022 (73 percent) and still up from a low of 67 percent in 2021.

Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (83 percent) were more likely to agree.

- **The possibility of military conflict with China within three years:** Half of Australians (50 percent) said that ‘Military conflict with China within three years is a serious possibility’, a continuation of views expressed in 2023 (51 percent). Twenty-three percent disagreed and 27 percent expressed neutrality.
- **Support for an increase in Australia’s defence spending:** Sixty-four percent of Australians said that ‘The Australian government is right to

statement 'If China launches a military attack on Taiwan, Australia should send troops to go to Taiwan's defence', although agreement with the view has incrementally but steadily decreased. This year, 35 percent of Australians agreed, down from 37 percent in 2023 and 39 percent in 2022. Additionally, 35 percent expressed neutrality and 30 percent disagreed.

When American involvement was added to the scenario, respondents were more inclined to agree, although the level of agreement decreased since last year. Forty-six percent of Australians said that 'In the event of a military conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan, Australia should lend military support to the United States', a six-point decrease from 2023 (52 percent) and a 10-point decrease from 2022 (56 percent), almost meeting a 45 percent low in 2021.

This year, 43 percent of Australians said that in this scenario 'Australia should remain neutral'. Agreement with this view has fluctuated somewhat over the last four years, but this year's result is still down from the high of 53 percent in 2021.

Victoria residents (17 percent) were significantly less likely to support Australian neutrality in the event of conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan.

- **Support for banning apps such as TikTok and WeChat:** About six in 10 Australians (59 percent) agreed that 'Australia should ban Chinese-owned apps such as TikTok and WeChat', reflecting a general continuation of views expressed in 2023 (61 percent) and still up from a low of 47 percent in 2022.

Older Australians aged 55+ (66 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (49 percent) were less likely to agree. Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (67 percent) were more likely to agree.

- **Public attribution of Chinese state-sponsored cybersecurity attacks:** A clear majority of Australians (82 percent) said that 'The Australian government is right to publicly call out any Chinese state-sponsored cybersecurity attacks on Australia's digital systems', reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last three years.

- **Espionage:** About six in 10 Australians (59 percent) said that 'Espionage conducted by China against Australia is more concerning than espionage against Australia conducted by other countries'. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (48 percent) were less likely to agree.

About the same proportion of Australians identified espionage conducted by China (67 percent) and Russia (66 percent) as a 'major problem'.

- **Foreign interference:** Fifty-eight percent of Australians said that 'Foreign interference in Australia stemming from China is more concerning than foreign interference from other countries', reflecting a steady decrease in agreement with this view over the last three years, down from 64 percent in 2023 and 67 percent in 2022.

That said, overall concern about foreign interference stemming from China remains high. Two-thirds of Australians (65 percent) said that 'Foreign interference in Australia stemming from China is a major problem', on par with concerns about foreign interference stemming from Russia (66 percent) and markedly higher than concerns about foreign interference stemming from the United States (43 percent).

4. The United States

- **Balancing Australia's relationships with the United States and China:** This year, about six in 10 Australians (61 percent) said that 'Australia can enjoy a good relationship with both China and the United States at the same time', reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years. Nearly four in 10 Australians (38 percent) said that 'Australia's relationship with China weakens our alliance with the United States'.

A belief is growing in Australian opinion that the United States or China will eventually force Australia to choose between a close relationship with Washington or a close relationship with Beijing. Just over half of Australians (52 percent) said such a choice will be forced by China, reflecting a four-year high. Forty-seven percent said the United States will force that choice, a continuation of views from 2023 (47 percent), a

five-point increase from 2022 (42 percent) and an eight-point increase from 2021 (39 percent).

- **The impact of a second Trump presidency:** Just over two-thirds of Australians (67 percent) said that ‘The Australian government’s balancing of its relationships with China and the US will be made more difficult if Donald Trump returns to the US presidency in 2024’.

Australians who voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (79 percent) were more likely to agree, while those who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (59 percent) were less likely to agree.

- **Influence in the region:** Over the last four years, Australians have become progressively less convinced that ‘China has more influence than the United States in Australia’s regional neighbourhood’. Fifty-five percent agreed with this statement this year, a 10-point decrease from a 65 percent high in 2021.

5. Trade and investment

- **The economic relationship overall:** Nearly three-quarters of Australians (74 percent) said that ‘Australia is too economically reliant on China’, reflecting a general continuation of views from 2023 (72 percent) and 2022 (74 percent), down from a high of 80 percent in 2021.

Australians have not shown much confidence over three years that ‘The Australian government has been successful in efforts to diversify trade, reducing Australia’s economic exposure to China’, with 44 percent agreeing with the statement this year, a general continuation of views from 2023 (44 percent) and slightly up from 2022 (42 percent).

There has also been a steady decrease over the last four years in agreement with the notion that Australia’s prosperity is closely linked with economic engagement with China. This year, 54 percent of Australians said ‘Without close economic engagement with China, Australia would not be as prosperous as it currently is’, down nine points from a high of 63 percent in 2021.

In parallel, there has been a steady, incremental decrease in the number of Australians saying that

‘Trade with China has created job opportunities in Australia’. Sixty-one percent of Australians agreed this year, down from a high of 65 percent in 2021.

As Australian views slowly grow more negative on bilateral economic relations, so too does agreement with the notion that the ‘The Australian government needs to be supportive of having closer economic ties with China’. This year’s poll showed that 46 percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a steady, incremental decrease from a high of 51 percent in 2022.

- **The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP):** Australians remain lukewarm about supporting China’s bid to join the agreement, with one-third of Australians (33 percent) saying that ‘The Australian government should support China’s bid to join’ the CPTPP, reflecting a general continuation of views from 2023 (35 percent) and 2022 (31 percent).

Australians still express stronger support for Taiwan’s bid, but there has been a steady decrease in agreement with this view over the last three years. This year, 58 percent of Australians said that ‘The Australian government should support Taiwan’s bid to join’ the CPTPP, an eight-point decrease from a high of 66 percent in 2022.

Older Australians aged 55+ (69 percent) were more likely to support Taiwan’s CPTPP bid, while younger Australians aged 18–34 (45 percent) were less likely to do so.

- **Trade case study – Tourism:** At this point in time, Australians are slightly less convinced about the economic merits of outbound tourism from China. Sixty-seven percent of Australians said that ‘Tourists from China provide a major economic benefit to Australia’. This figure represents a four-year low and is down seven points from a high of 74 percent in 2021.

Fifty-eight percent of Australians said that ‘Australia should continue to work towards making Australia an attractive destination for Chinese tourists’. This figure represents a four-year low and is down five points from a high of 63 percent in 2021.

- **Trade case study – Education:** Sixty-eight percent of Australians said that ‘International students from China provide a major economic

benefit to Australia', a general continuation of views over the last three years, down from a high of 76 percent in 2021. At the same time, nearly three-quarters of Australians (73 percent) believe that 'Australian universities are too financially reliant on international students from China'.

- **Foreign investment:** General support for foreign investment from China remains low, with just over half of Australians (51 percent) saying that 'Foreign investment from China is more detrimental than beneficial to Australia'. Only 16 percent disagreed, while 33 percent expressed neutrality.
- **Investment case study – Port of Darwin:** Australians are not supportive of the Australian government's decision to allow Landbridge's lease of the Port of Darwin to continue. Only 26 percent of Australians said that 'The Australian government was right not to cancel or vary Chinese-owned company Landbridge's 99-year lease of the Port of Darwin'.

Just over six in 10 Australians (62 percent) said the Australian government should force Landbridge 'to sell the port back to the government'.

- **Investment case study – Critical minerals:** While most Australians (62 percent) are broadly supportive of a blanket limitation on foreign investment in Australia's critical minerals industry, support increased by 10 points (72 percent) when a limitation on China was specified.
- **Investment case study – Agriculture:** Levels of concern about Chinese ownership of Australian agricultural assets remain high.

Only 30 percent of Australians said that 'Chinese investment in agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia is more beneficial than detrimental to Australia's interests'. At the same time, about two-thirds of Australians (64 percent) said they believe that 'Chinese ownership of agricultural assets [...] in Australia is more concerning than ownership by companies from other countries'.

Moreover, nearly seven in 10 Australians (69 percent) said that 'Chinese ownership of agricultural assets [...] in Australia presents a threat to Australia's food security'.

- **Investment case study – Residential real estate:** Chinese investment in

Australian residential real estate continues to generate concern.

Only 28 percent of Australians said that 'Chinese investment in Australian residential real estate brings a lot of benefits for Australians (e.g., construction, new dwellings, jobs)', a four-year low. Agreement with this statement has incrementally decreased over the last four years.

A clear majority of Australians (80 percent) said that 'Foreign buyers from China drive up Australian housing prices', a seven-point increase from 2023 (73 percent), almost back to an 82 percent high recorded in 2021.

Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of Australians also said that 'Chinese investors have negatively affected the rental market for residential real estate in Australia', a six-point increase from 2023 (68 percent) and reflecting a four-year high.

The belief that 'Australia should restrict the amount of investment in residential real estate that is permitted from Chinese investors' is also at a four-year high, with 83 percent of Australians agreeing with the statement.

- **Business ties:** Australians remain generally supportive of maintaining business ties with China. Nearly two-thirds of Australians (65 percent) said 'Australian companies should continue to pursue business opportunities with China'.

But Australians also continue to express some reservations stemming from the Chinese government's domestic policies. Australians said that Australia should not do business with China, citing various reasons, including its 'record on human rights' (45 percent); 'domestic censorship of media, internet and other forms of communication' (40 percent); and 'record on environmental practices' (31 percent).

6. Society

- **The Australian-Chinese community:** Forty-nine percent of Australians said that 'Political tensions in the Australia-China relationship are negatively impacting Australians of Chinese origin', reflecting a steady decrease in agreement over the last four years, down from a high of 63 percent in 2021.

Forty-three percent of Australians said that ‘Australians of Chinese origin can be mobilised by the Chinese government to undermine Australia’s interests and social cohesion’, a continuation of views from 2023 (43 percent), with agreement having incrementally increased since 2022 (42 percent) and 2021 (39 percent).

Younger Australians aged 18–34 (37 percent) and Australians who voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (37 percent) were less likely to agree.

- **Support for sanctions legislation:** Sixty-eight percent of Australians said that ‘Australia should place sanctions, such as travel and financial bans, on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights violations’, a continuation of views from 2023 (68 percent) and still up from a low of 65 percent in 2022.
- **Arbitrary detention:** Seventy-three percent of Australians said that ‘The risk of arbitrary detention is a concern when considering travel to China’, reflecting a four-year high, although this concern has generally remained acute over the last four years.
- **International students:** Fifty-three percent of Australians said that ‘International students from China help strengthen the people-to-people links (e.g., family, friendships, business contacts, tourism) between the two countries’, reflecting a four-year low and down from a high of 58 percent in 2021.

Just over one-third of Australians (35 percent) harbour concerns that ‘International students from China are potentially reducing the quality of education at Australian universities’.

Forty-six percent of Australians expressed the concern that ‘International students from China mean there are less places for domestic students to study in their choice of Australian university’.

7. University and research

- **Freedom of academic speech:** Forty-five percent of Australians expressed concern that ‘Australian university ties with China compromise Australian freedom of speech’, reflecting a four-year low, and down from a high of 50 percent in 2022.

- **Research collaboration – General:** While Australians had previously maintained a steady level of support for Australia–China university research collaboration, this year 54 percent said that ‘Academics from Australia should continue to partner with academics from China to undertake research projects’, a seven-point decrease from 2023 and 2022 (both 61 percent).
- **Research collaboration – Science:** Two-thirds of Australians (66 percent) said that ‘It is beneficial for Australian scientists to have research connections to China’, reflecting a general continuation of views over the last four years. Sixty-two percent said that overall ‘Australian scientists working with Chinese scientists is beneficial for Australia’, reflecting a four-year low, down from a high of 69 percent in 2022.

8. Competition and cooperation

- **Building closer relationships with Southeast Asian and Pacific Island nations to counter China’s influence:** There is strong support among Australians for closer ties with Southeast Asian and Pacific Island nations in order to counter China’s influence. Seventy-one percent said that ‘It is beneficial for Australia to build closer relationships with Southeast Asian nations, including through increased aid assistance, to counter China’s influence in the region’. Seventy-four percent said that ‘It is beneficial for Australia to build closer relationships with Pacific Island nations, including through increased aid assistance, in order to counter China’s influence in the region’.
- **Global and regional cooperation:** Even as Australians have expressed a number of concerns regarding threats emanating from China, there remains fairly high and steady support for Australia working cooperatively with China to tackle global and regional issues.

Seven in 10 Australians (70 percent) said that ‘It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on global issues, such as climate change and global health’.

Sixty-nine percent also said that ‘It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on regional issues, such as ending malaria in the Pacific’.



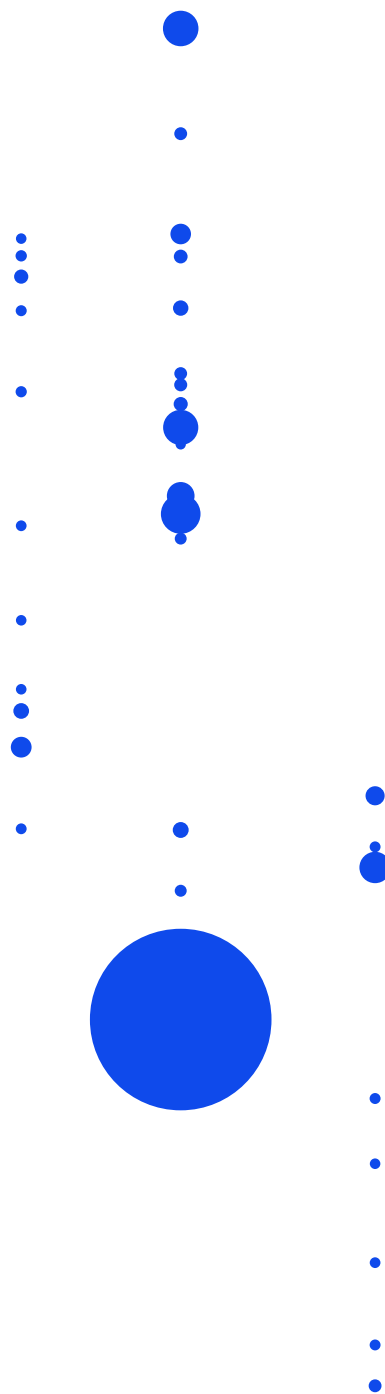
1. Overall views on the Australia-China relationship

1.1 Background

Australia's Labor government has continued to cleave to the position it outlined upon first coming into government: 'cooperate where we can, disagree where we must, and engage in the national interest'.¹ Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described the approach as 'a principled and practical way of managing complexity that is delivering benefits for Australia, China and the region.' He noted that the government was 'clear-eyed' about China, mindful that 'we remain two nations with very different values and political systems'.²

In November last year, the Prime Minister visited China, the first such visit by an Australian prime minister since 2016. During his four-day visit, he met with China's senior leadership, including President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and National People's Congress Standing Committee Chairman Zhao Leji. A mutually agreed statement on joint outcomes at the conclusion of the visit outlined areas in which both nations agreed to continue or expand engagement.³ The Prime Minister described the trip as symbolising the 'normalisation' of relations and 'a more stable relationship'.⁴

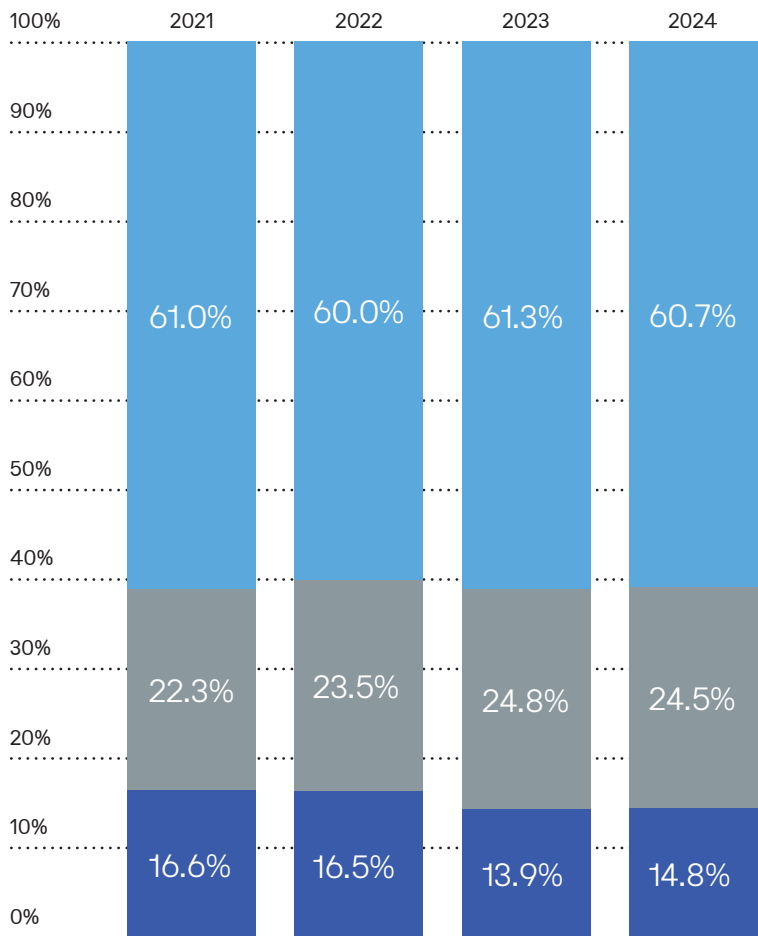
Bilateral relations have improved since the 2016 to early 2022 trough that saw the cessation of high-level dialogue and a swathe of trade restrictions implemented by Beijing as part of a concerted campaign of economic coercion. The former has resumed with regular ministerial meetings and talks between senior officials now back in place, and the latter have gradually been lifted, with major tariffs on Australian barley and wine removed in August 2023 and March 2024 respectively.⁵ Trade impediments still remain, however, on lobster and several meat processing establishments, and the bilateral relationship remains complex, subject to multiple pressures and challenges.



1.2 Building stronger connections and ties, and a strong relationship

Six in 10 Australians (61 percent) believe that Australia should continue to try to build strong connections and ties, and have a strong relationship with China. This is a steady continuation of sentiment over the last four years. Twenty-five percent expressed neutrality and 15 percent disagreed (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Support for Australia building stronger connections and ties, and having a strong relationship with China



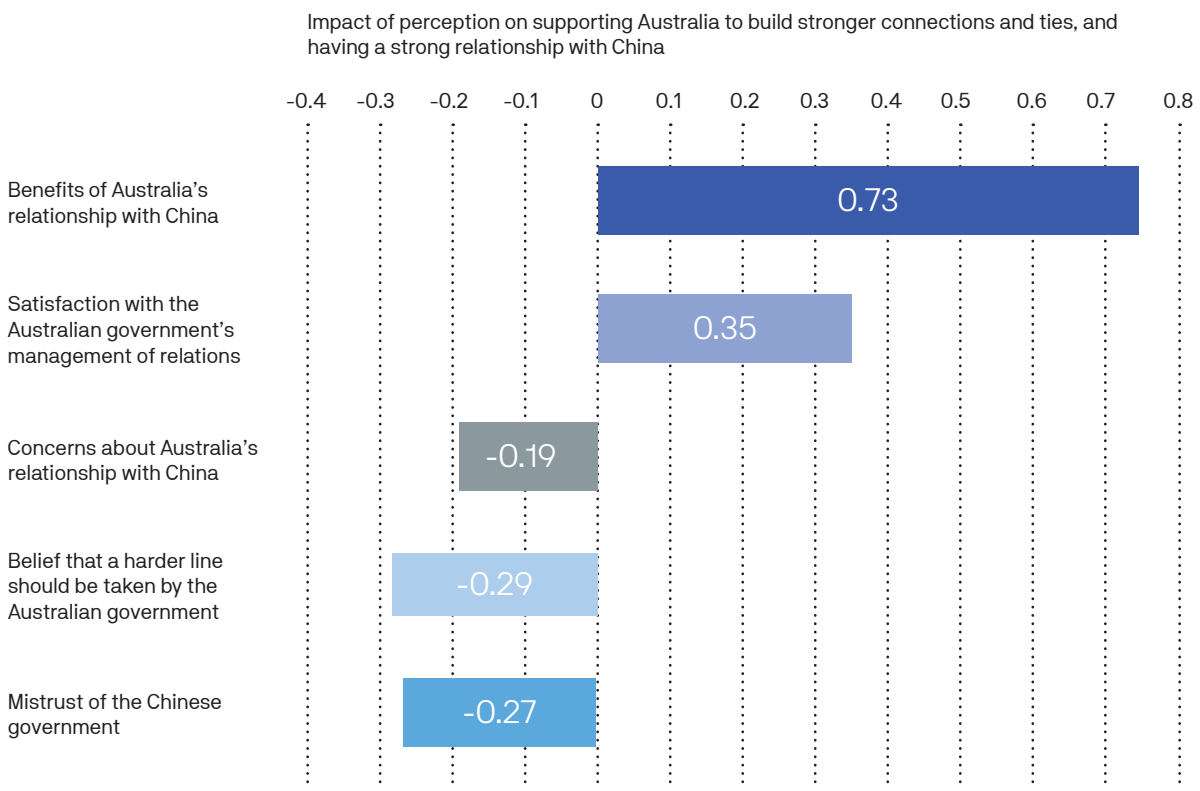
Australia should try to build strong connections with China

Australia should build strong ties with China

Australia should have a strong relationship with China

Legend: Agree (light blue), Neutral (grey), Disagree (dark blue)

Figure 2. Predictors of support for Australia building stronger connections and ties, and having a strong relationship with China



The biggest factor driving support for agreement with the sentiment that Australia should continue to try to build strong connections and ties, and have a strong relationship with China was perceived benefits of the Australia–China relationship.

To a lesser extent, the level of satisfaction with the Australian government's management of bilateral relations also had some bearing on support for this sentiment. Respondents who concurrently expressed concerns about the bilateral relationship were not precluded from also expressing support for Australia building stronger connections and ties, and having a strong relationship with China (Figure 2).

Respondents who expressed mistrust of the Chinese government and who tended towards agreeing that a harder stance on China ought to be adopted by the Australian government were less likely to support the view that Australia should build stronger connections and ties, and have a strong relationship with China (Figure 2).

Table 1. Latent factors impacting support for building stronger connections and ties, and having a strong relationship with China

	More supportive	Less supportive
State	Australian Capital Territory	Tasmania; New South Wales
Age	55+	-
Gender	Male	Female
Location (Urban/rural)	-	-
Household type	-	-
Education (highest level)	Postgraduate degree	High School
Employment	Retired	Unemployed or other
Income	Higher income (>\$91,000 p.a.)	Lower income (<\$41,600 p.a.)
Political view	Left-wing	Neutral; Right-wing
Voting behaviour in the 2022 federal election	Australian Labor Party	Other minority party

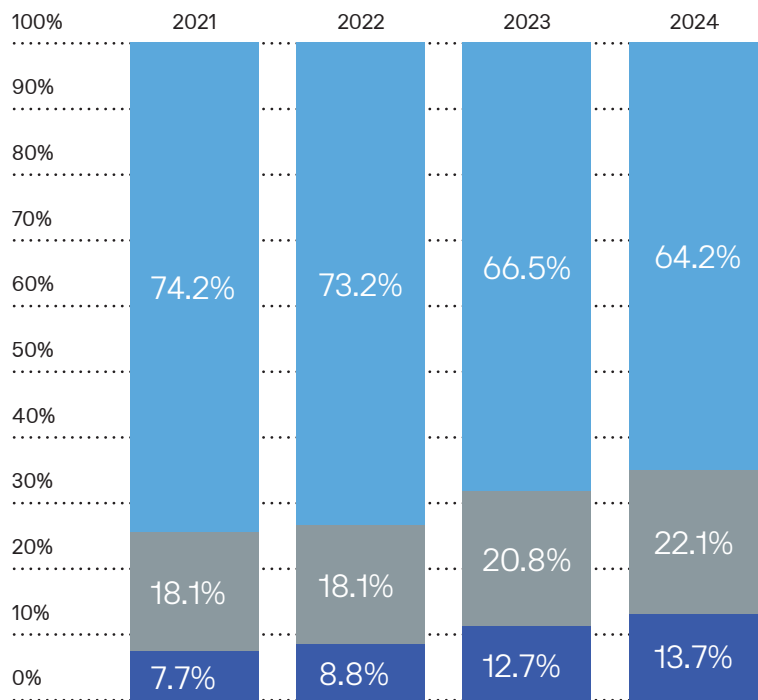
Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were: residence in the Australian Capital Territory, gender as male and having completed a postgraduate degree as the highest level of education. Respondents in this group also reported their employment status as retired, with earnings of a higher income of greater than \$91,000 per annum. They listed their political views as left-wing and voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (Table 1).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were: residence in either Tasmania or New South Wales, gender as female and having completed high school as the highest level of education. Respondents in this group also reported their employment status as unemployed or 'other', with earnings of a lower income of less than \$41,600 per annum. They listed their political views as neutral or right-wing and voted for a minority party at the 2022 federal election (Table 1).

1.3 Concerns

Sixty-four percent of Australians expressed concerns about Australia’s relationship with China. This sentiment reflects a steady decrease over the last four years, a 10-point decrease from a high of 74 percent in 2021. Twenty-two percent expressed neutrality and 14 percent disagreed (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Concerns about Australia’s relationship with China



I am concerned about Australia’s relationship with China

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

I am very apprehensive about the nature of Australia’s relationship with China

I am worried about how Australia and China interact with each other in a number of areas

I hold a lot of concerns about the Australia-China bilateral relationship

Table 2. Latent factors impacting concerns about Australia's relationship with China

	More concerned	Less concerned
State	-	-
Age	55+	18-34
Gender	-	-
Location (Urban/rural)	Rural	-
Household type	-	-
Education (highest level)	-	-
Employment	Retired	-
Income	-	-
Political view	Right-wing	Left-wing
Voting behaviour in the 2022 federal election	Liberal/National	Australian Labor Party; Rather not say / Did not vote

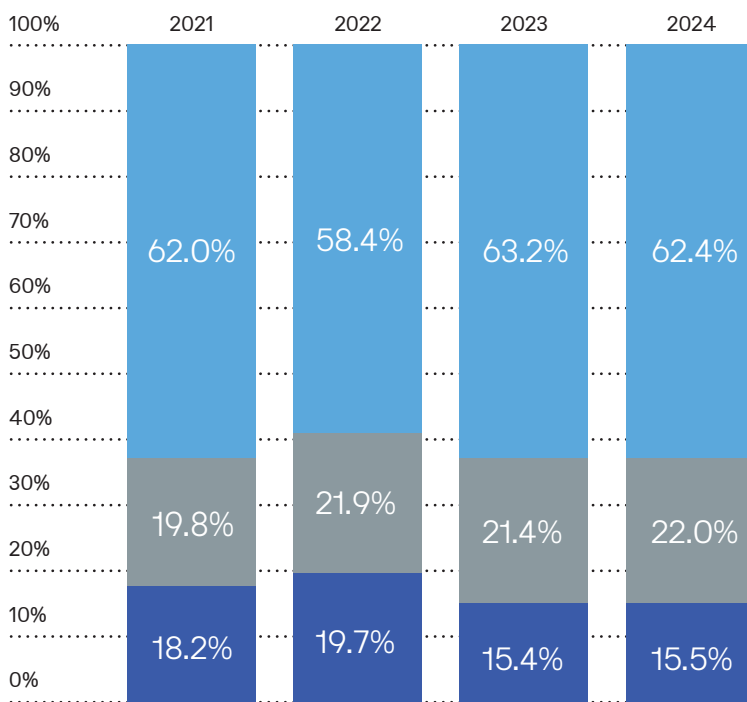
Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were: an older age bracket (aged 55+), residing in a rural area and employment status as retired. Respondents in this group also listed their political views as right-wing and voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (Table 2).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were: a younger age bracket (aged 18-34 and left-wing political views. Respondents in this group also voted for the Australian Labor Party or said they would prefer not to say which party they voted for or did not vote at the 2022 federal election (Table 2).

1.4 Benefits

Sixty-two percent of Australians said they see the benefits of Australia’s relationship with China, reflecting a general continuation of sentiment expressed over the last four years, and still up from a low of 58 percent in 2022. Twenty-two percent expressed neutrality and 16 percent disagreed (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Benefits of Australia’s relationship with China



- It is very beneficial for Australia to have a working relationship with China
-
- I believe the nature of Australia’s relationship with China is of great value for Australia
-
- I believe how Australia and China interact with each other in a number of areas provides many benefits for Australia
-
- Australia’s relationship with China is positive for Australia
-

Table 3. Latent factors impacting perceived benefits of Australia's relationship with China

	More beneficial	Less beneficial
State	Australian Capital Territory	Tasmania
Age	18–34	55+
Gender	Male	Female
Location (Urban/rural)	-	Rural
Household type	Couple family with no dependent children	Family with dependent children
Education (highest level)	Bachelor's degree; Postgraduate degree	High school
Employment	Full-time	Unemployed or other
Income	Higher income (>\$91,000 p.a.)	Lower income (<\$41,600 p.a.)
Political view	Left-wing	Neutral; Right-wing
Voting behaviour in the 2022 federal election	Australian Labor Party	Rather not say / Did not vote

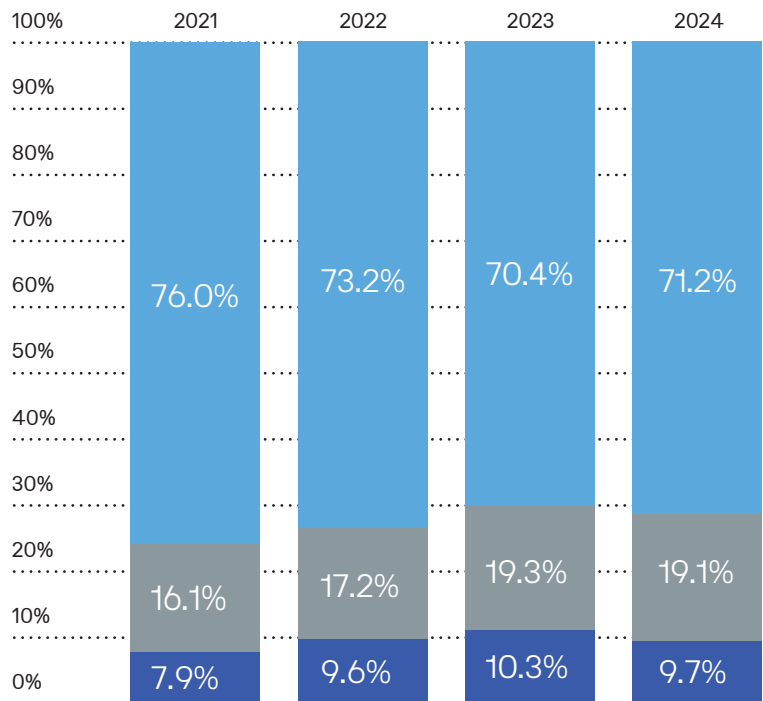
Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were: residence in the Australian Capital Territory and occupying a younger age bracket (aged 18–34). Respondents in this group reported their gender as male and their household type as a couple family with no dependent children. They also reported having completed either a bachelor's degree or a postgraduate degree as their highest level of education, and their employment status as full-time. They reported earnings of a higher income of greater than \$91,000 per annum. They listed their political views as left-wing and voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (Table 3).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were: residence in Tasmania and in a rural area, as well as occupying an older age bracket (55+). Respondents in this group reported their gender as female and their household type as a family with dependent children. They also reported completing high school as their highest level of education and their employment status as unemployed or 'other'. They reported earnings of a lower income of less than \$41,600 per annum. They listed their political views as neutral or right-wing and said they would prefer not to say which party they voted for or did not vote at the 2022 federal election (Table 3).

1.5 Mistrust of the Chinese government

Just over seven in 10 Australians (71 percent) expressed mistrust of the Chinese government, reflecting a general continuation of sentiment expressed over the last three years, down from a high of 76 percent in 2021. Nineteen percent expressed neutrality and 10 percent disagreed (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Mistrust of the Chinese government



I have a lot of mistrust towards the Chinese government in its dealings with Australia

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

The Chinese government cannot be trusted in its dealings with Australia

It is difficult to believe the Chinese government when it comes to its dealings with Australia

I am sceptical of the Chinese government when it comes to its dealings with Australia

The Australian government should be suspicious of the Chinese government when it comes to having dealings with them

Table 4. Latent factors impacting level of mistrust of the Chinese government

	More mistrusting	Less mistrusting
State	-	Western Australia
Age	55+	18–34
Gender	-	-
Location (Urban/rural)	-	-
Household type	-	-
Education (highest level)	-	-
Employment	Retired	Full-time
Income	-	-
Political view	Right-wing	Left-wing
Voting behaviour in the 2022 federal election	Liberal/National	Rather not say / Did not vote

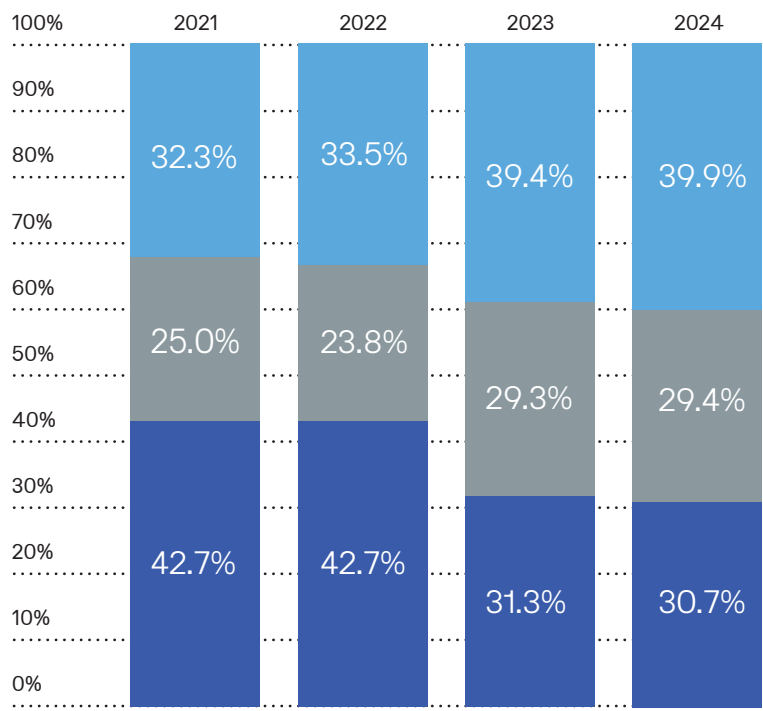
Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were: occupying an older age bracket (aged 55+) and an employment status as retired. Respondents in this group listed their political view as right-wing and voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (Table 4).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were: residence in Western Australia, occupying a younger age bracket (aged 18–34) and an employment status as full-time. Respondents in this group listed their political view as left-wing and said they would prefer not to say which political party they voted for or did not vote at the 2022 federal election (Table 4).

1.6 The Australian government's management of China relations

Four in 10 Australians (40 percent) say that the Australian government is managing Australia's relationship with China well, reflecting a continuation of views expressed in 2023 (39 percent), up from 34 percent in 2022 and 32 percent in 2021. Twenty-nine percent expressed neutrality and 31 percent disagreed (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Satisfaction with the Australian government's management of China relations



The Australian government is managing Australia's relationship with China well

The Australian government is doing a good job in managing Australia's relationship with China

I am satisfied with the Australian government's management of Australia's relationship with China

Table 5. Latent factors impacting level of satisfaction with the Australian government’s management of China relations

	More satisfied	Less satisfied
State	New South Wales	Victoria
Age	18–34	55+
Gender	-	-
Location (Urban/rural)	Large metropolitan	Rural
Household type	Family with dependent children	Couple family with no dependent children
Education (highest level)	Postgraduate degree	Certificate / Trade / Diploma
Employment	-	Unemployed or other
Income	Higher income (>\$91,000 p.a.)	-
Political view	Left-wing	Right-wing
Voting behaviour in the 2022 federal election	Australian Labor Party	Liberal/National; Rather not say / Did not vote

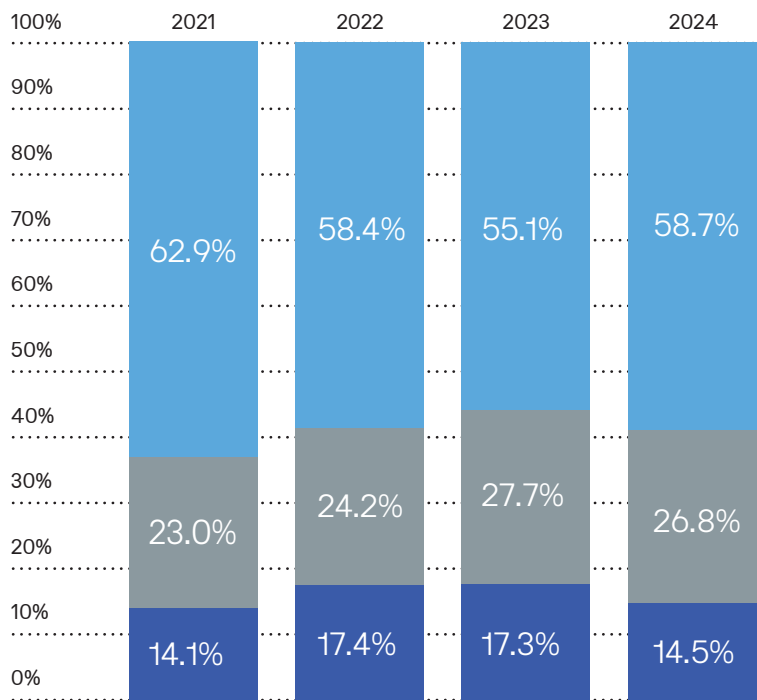
Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were: residence in New South Wales and in a large metropolitan area, as well as occupying a younger age bracket (18–34). Respondents in this group reported their household type as a family with dependent children. They also reported completing a postgraduate degree as their highest level of education. They reported earnings of a higher income of greater than \$91,000 per annum. They listed their political views as left-wing and voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (Table 5).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were: residence in Victoria and in a rural area, as well as occupying an older age bracket (55+). Respondents in this group reported their household type as a couple family with no dependent children. They also reported completing a certificate, trade or diploma as their highest level of education and their employment status as unemployed or ‘other’. They listed their political views as right-wing and voted for the Liberal/Nationals or said they would prefer not to say which party they voted for or did not vote at the 2022 federal election (Table 5).

1.7 A harder Australian government line on China

Nearly six in 10 Australians (59 percent) believe that the Australian government should take a harder line with respect to its policies dealing with China, slightly up after a decrease over two years in 2023 (55 percent) and 2022 (58 percent), but still down from a high of 63 percent in 2021. Twenty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 15 percent disagreed (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Support for a harder government line on China



I believe the Australian government should take a harder line with respect to its relationship with China

I believe the Australian government should take a harder line with respect to its policies dealing with China

Australia should be harder when it comes to dealing with China

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

Table 6. Latent factors impacting support for a harder government line on China

	More supportive	Less supportive
State	-	-
Age	55+	18-34
Gender	-	-
Location (Urban/rural)	-	-
Household type	-	-
Education (highest level)	High school	Postgraduate degree
Employment	-	-
Income	-	-
Political view	Right-wing	Left-wing
Voting behaviour in the 2022 federal election	Liberal/Nationals	Australian Labor Party

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were: an older age bracket (55+) and the completion of high school as the highest level of education. Respondents in this group also listed their political views as right-wing and voted for the Liberal/Nationals in the 2022 federal election (Table 6).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were: a younger age bracket (18-34) and the completion of a postgraduate degree as the highest level of education. Respondents in this group also listed their political views as left-wing and voted for the Australian Labor Party in the 2022 federal election (Table 6).

1.8 Responsibility for improving the Australia–China relationship

‘The responsibility for improving the relationship between Australia and China lies with both countries’

Nearly eight in 10 Australians (79 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years. Sixteen percent expressed neutrality and six percent disagreed (Figure 8).

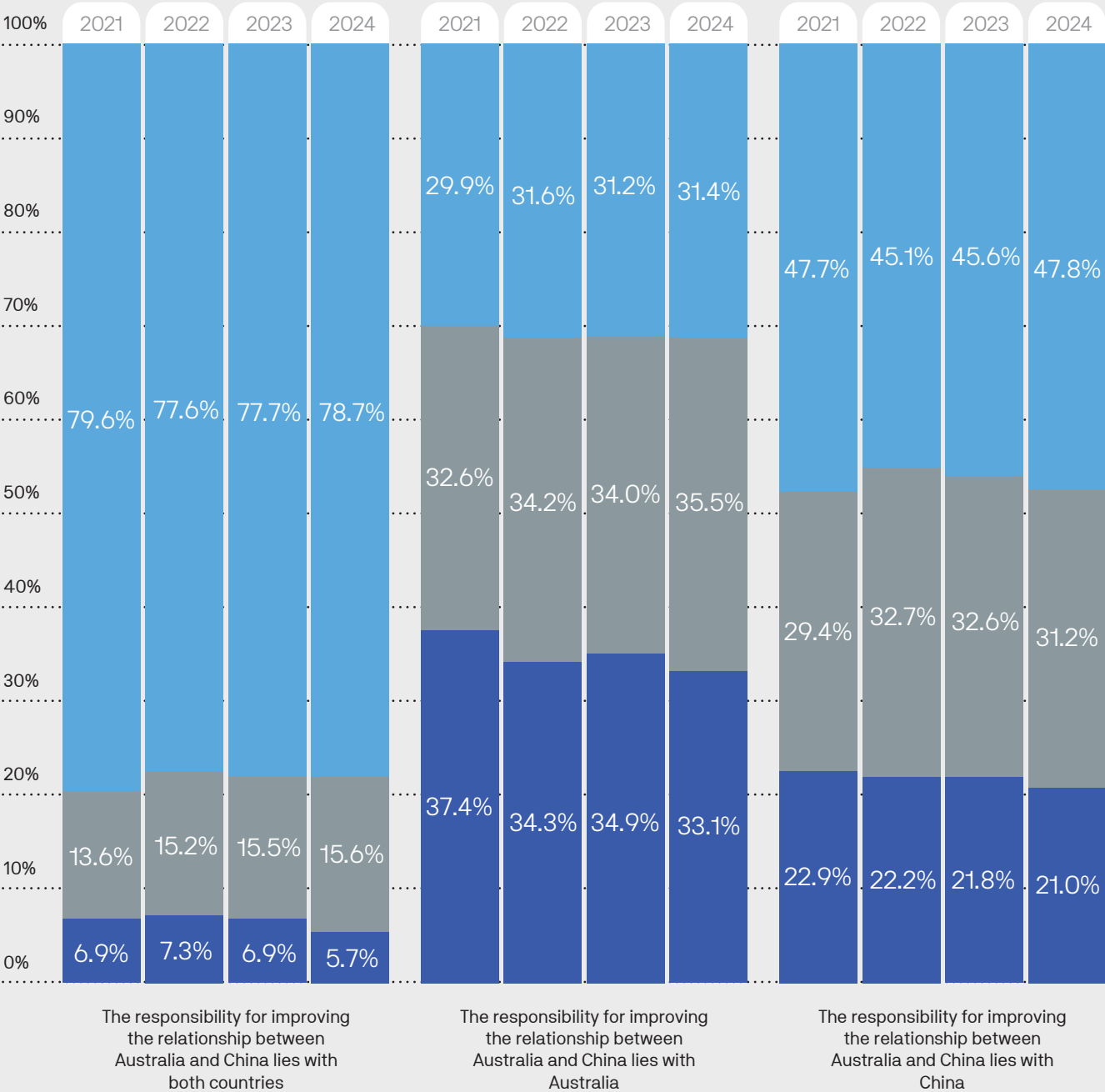
‘The responsibility for improving the relationship between Australia and China lies with China’

Almost half of Australians (48 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views over the last four years. Thirty-one percent expressed neutrality and 21 percent disagreed (Figure 8).

‘The responsibility for improving the relationship between Australia and China lies with Australia’

Nearly one-third of Australians (31 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years. Thirty-six percent expressed neutrality and 33 percent disagreed (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Responsibility for improving the Australia-China relationship



● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree

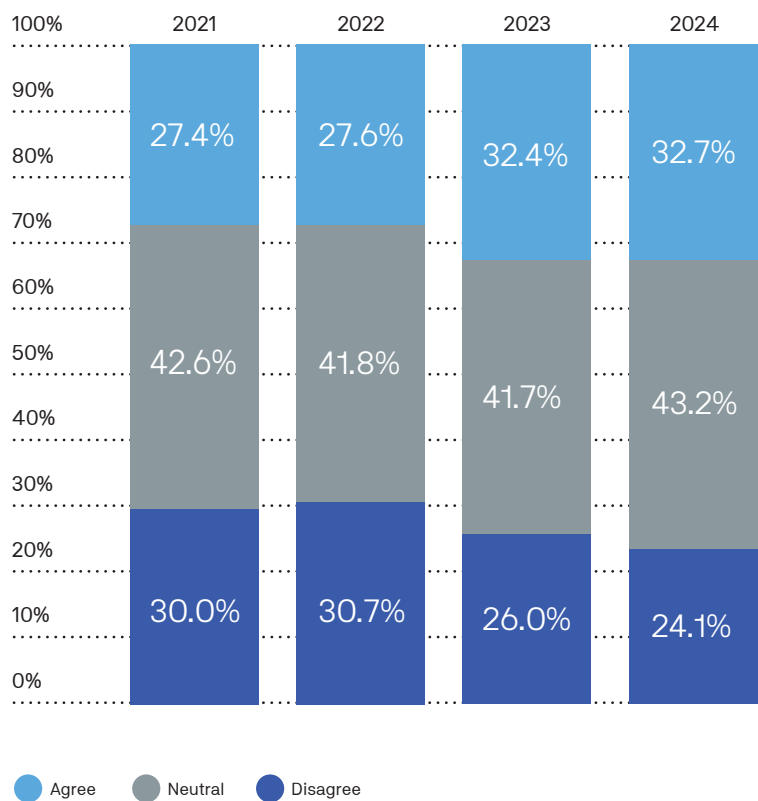
1.9 Future outlook

'The Australia–China relationship will improve in the next three years'

One-third of Australians (33 percent) agreed, reflecting a steady incremental increase in agreement with this view over the last four years, up from a low of 27 percent in 2021. Forty-three percent expressed neutrality and 24 percent disagreed (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Improvement of the Australia–China relationship in the next three years

The Australia–China relationship will improve in the next three years



2. Politics and political communication

2.1 Background

Prime Minister Albanese described his government's approach to China relations as 'patient, calibrated and deliberate'.⁶

Throughout the year, the Australian government continued to emphasise the importance of maintaining dialogue with Beijing, of keeping rhetoric level and communicating disagreement without the use of a megaphone, while being prepared to publicly criticise China when necessary – a position the Australian Labor Party had adopted upon taking office in mid-2022.

The fact that dialogue has continued despite persistent challenges in the relationship has been framed as an achievement.⁷ In a major foreign policy speech, the Prime Minister said his government placed 'priority on communication over confrontation'.⁸ Foreign Minister Penny Wong stated that 'engagement matters for Australia' in order to 'advocate for Australia's national interest',⁹ while Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles said that diplomacy 'will always be the front line of our engagement' and is 'not measured by the volume with which friends agree. Rather its measure is in how tensions are navigated. Substantive discussion always matters.'¹⁰

The Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister also differentiated Labor's China rhetoric and relationship management from the Liberal/National coalition, stating that pre-federal election in 2022, 'Australia was in the midst of a shrill and fundamentalist debate about China. A debate which seemed to be about a short-term electoral interest at the expense of the national interest. ... These actions made our already deeply complex relationship with China much harder. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a relationship less suited to simplistic platitudes.'¹¹

Treasurer Jim Chalmers pointed to the need for pragmatism in navigating the bilateral relationship and an understanding that there is 'a good way and a bad way' to advance interests in the face of differences.¹²

Following a long pause in high-level dialogue, ministerial exchanges between Australia and China have now been conducted with regularity and at a fairly high frequency. Prime Minister Albanese, Foreign Minister Wong and Trade Minister Don Farrell have travelled to China, and Australia this year received China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, the most senior Chinese official to visit since then-Premier Li Keqiang met with then-prime minister Malcolm Turnbull in 2017. Last year also saw a number of other Chinese officials visit Australia, including the head of the International Liaison Department of the Communist Party of China, Liu Jianchao, China's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Ma Zhaoxu and Education Minister Huai Jinping.

The opposition has been relatively welcoming of ministerial exchanges and visits,¹³ but have charged the government with being 'weak' and the Prime Minister as 'out of his depth' on national security and China. On this front members of the opposition have pointed to the government's release of its decision not to cancel the Port of Darwin lease 'without standing up and explaining the decision'.¹⁴ They have also pointed to Prime Minister Albanese's refusal to confirm whether he had raised an incident in which a Chinese warship used sonar while Australian navy divers were still in the water during his discussions after the fact with President Xi on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific leaders' summit.¹⁵

2.2 Political party best placed to handle Australia's China policy

Which political party is best placed to handle Australia's China policy?

The view that the Australian Labor Party is best placed to handle Australia's China policy is less pronounced this year, with the Liberal/National coalition starting to close the gap that had opened up in 2023.

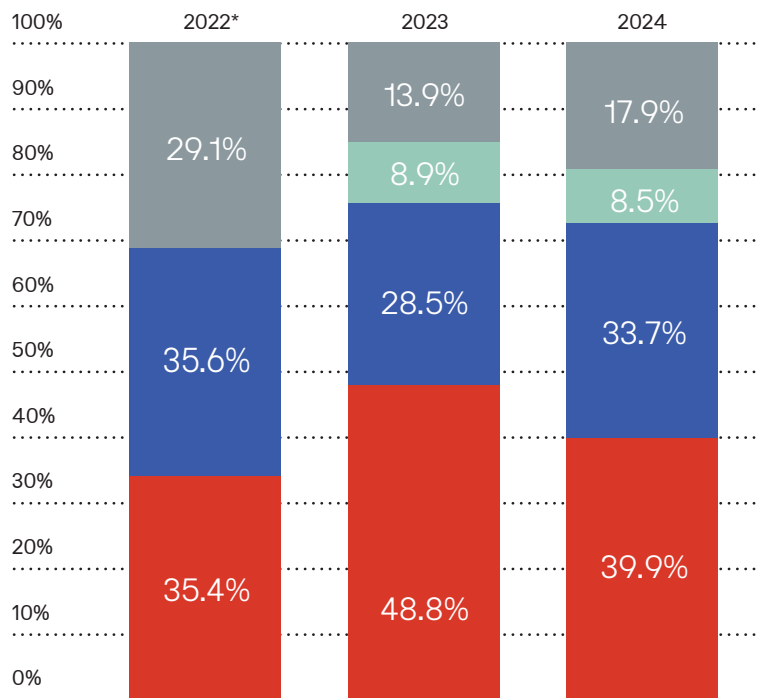
Four in 10 Australians (40 percent) nominated the Australian Labor Party as the political party best placed to handle Australia's China policy. This reflects a nine-point decrease from 2023 (49 percent), although is still up from the pre-election low of 35 percent in 2022 (Figure 10).

Thirty-four percent of Australians said the Liberal/National coalition is best placed to handle Australia's China policy, a five-point increase from 2023 (29 percent), inching back to a previous high of 36 percent going into the 2022 federal election (Figure 10).

Nine percent of Australians nominated the Greens, a steady continuation of views expressed in 2023 (nine percent), while 18 percent nominated another political party, up from 14 percent in 2023 (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Political party best placed to handle Australia's China policy

Which political party is best placed to handle Australia's China policy?



- Australian Labor Party
- Liberal/Nationals
- Greens
- Other

*Note: No data is available for the Greens in 2022. Respondents in that year selected from the choices of the Australian Labor Party, Liberal/Nationals and Other.

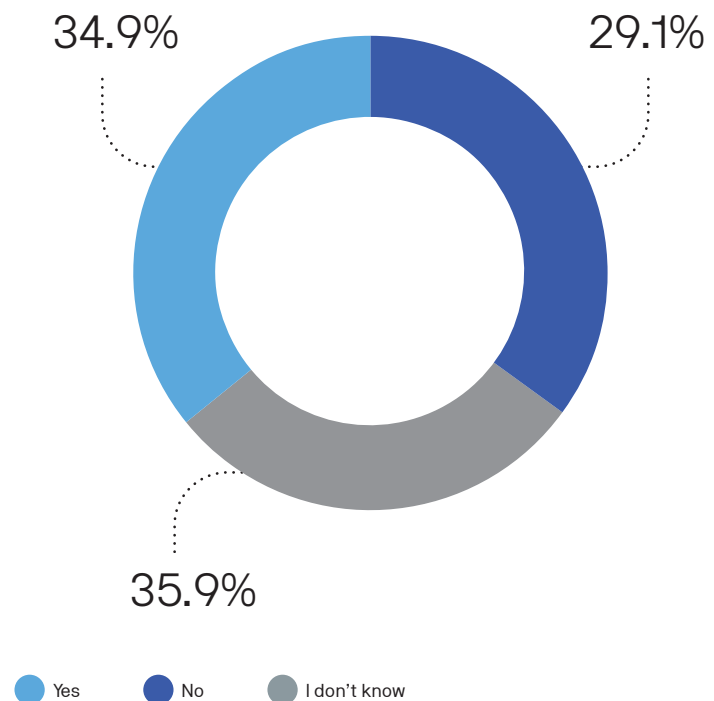
2.3 Management of Australia's China policy and impact on upcoming federal election vote

'Will management of China policy be an issue that will impact your vote in the next federal election?'

Australians are fairly evenly split on whether management of Australia's China policy will be an issue that will impact their vote at the next federal election, although a slightly higher proportion of respondents said that they would factor the issue into their voting considerations (35 percent) compared with respondents who said they would not factor the issue in (29 percent). Thirty-six percent said they did not know (Figure 11).

Figure 11. **Management of China policy: An issue that will impact voting behaviour at the upcoming federal election?**

Will management of China policy be an issue that will impact your vote in the next federal election?



2.4 Communication over areas of disagreement

‘The Australian government’s disputes with the Chinese government are better communicated through diplomatic channels rather than public statements’

About six in 10 Australians (61 percent) agreed. This majority view that communication of disputes via diplomatic channels is preferable to public statements has remained relatively steady over the last four years. Twenty-six percent expressed neutrality and 14 percent disagreed (Figure 12).

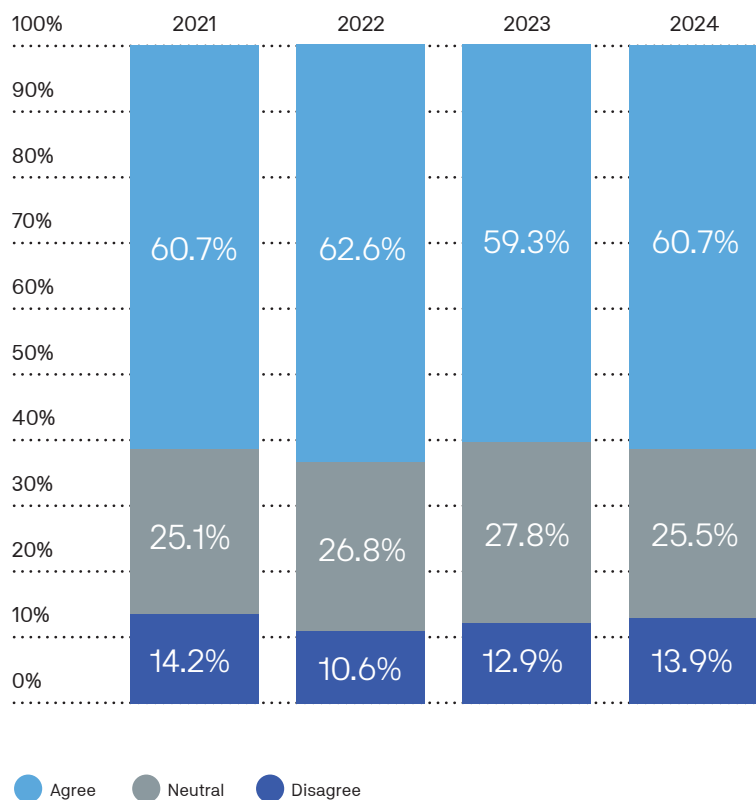
An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (71 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (50 percent) were less likely to agree.

An education divide: Australians who completed a postgraduate degree (68 percent) as their highest level of education were more likely to agree. Those who completed high school (48 percent) were less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (69 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 12. **Support for the Australian government’s communication of disputes through diplomatic channels**

The Australian government’s disputes with the Chinese government are better communicated through diplomatic channels rather than public statements



3.

Military and security

3.1 Background

Australia's Defence Strategic Review, released in April 2023, set out the agenda for reforming Australia's defence posture and force structure. It noted that China was presiding over 'the largest and most ambitious' military build-up 'of any country since the end of the Second World War... without transparency or reassurance... of [its] strategic intent.'¹⁶

Australia's *National Defence Strategy*, released in April 2024, outlined the expectation that China 'will continue to seek to play a more prominent role in the region. This will include leveraging all elements of its power as it pursues its strategic objectives, including to change the current regional balance in its favour'. It also charged Beijing with 'coercive tactics in pushing its strategic objectives, including forceful handling of territorial dualities and unsafe intercepts of vessels and aircraft operating in international waters and airspace in accordance with international law.'¹⁷

Indeed, concerns regarding maritime security have intensified, particularly regarding Beijing's aggression in the South China Sea.¹⁸ Beijing's armed forces have increased their instigation of unsafe interactions, such as a People's Liberation Army–Navy destroyer's emission of sonar pulses while Australian navy divers were still in the water.¹⁹ More recently, a People's Liberation Army–Air Force fighter plane released flares in the flightpath of an Australian Defence Force helicopter, forcing the latter to take evasive measures.²⁰

Work towards the realisation of AUKUS Pillar One, the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, has continued apace, with Australia committing \$4.6 billion to the UK to support British industry to design the submarines to be built in Adelaide and build and design the submarines' nuclear reactors, having previously made a similar financial commitment to bolster the US' submarine industrial base.²¹ In December last year, US Congress passed legislation facilitating the transfer of Virginia-class submarines to Australia and exempting Australia from US export control licensing requirements.²² Some concerns about the timeliness of the delivery of these boats have been expressed in both Australia and the US,²³ particularly in view of the US' recent

scaling down of nuclear-powered submarine production from two to one annually,²⁴ but Australian federal ministers have downplayed the development and expressed confidence that all remains on track.²⁵

Cross-Strait tensions continue to simmer. Against this backdrop, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Marles called for a strengthening of a collective effort to deter conflict in the Taiwan Strait saying, '[W]e cannot be passive bystanders'.²⁶

A former senior Australian defence and intelligence official said last year that there was a 'very serious risk' ('close to 50-50') of a major conflict between the US and China over Taiwan before the end of the decade.²⁷ Former defence minister Kim Beazley expressed similar views stating that '[i]f Xi wants to do it by 2027, that's probably the outer point of the availability to him', that Beijing has 'actually reached the point where they might be able to do it, and certainly, they may be reaching a point of some desperation to do it.'²⁸ Australian government ministers have refrained from highlighting precise timeframes although Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Marles has stated that 'Australia no longer has the luxury of a 10-year window of strategic warning time for conflict'.²⁹

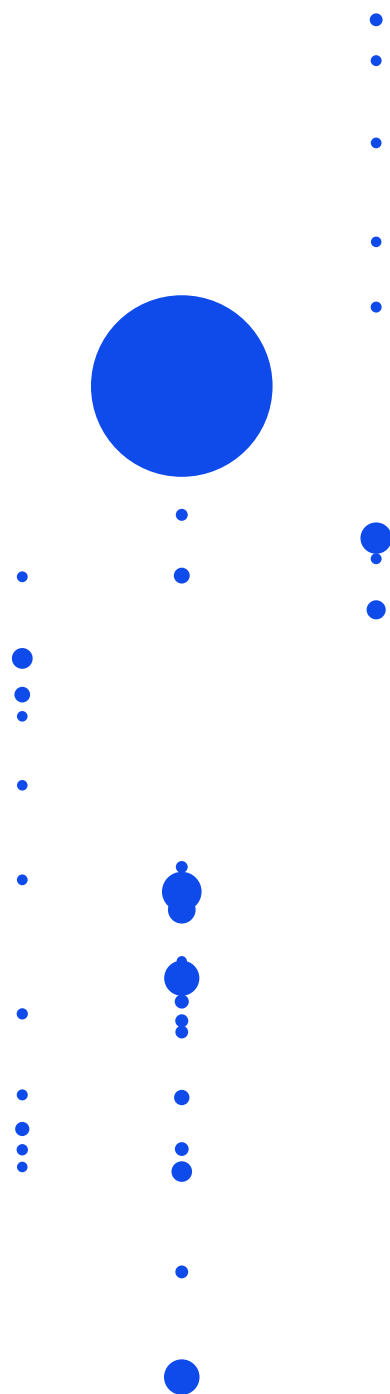
In 2023 and 2024, the Australian government joined with other nations to express concerns about China-backed cyberattacks.³⁰ The Australian Signals Directorate, responsible for foreign signals intelligence, in their annual *Cyber Threat Report* identified China as a major state sponsor of malicious cyber activity against Australian companies and critical infrastructure.³¹ Five Eyes intelligence chiefs also made their first joint public appearance in which they highlighted sustained intellectual property theft by China.³²

A report by the Australian Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media stated that '[e]ffectively countering foreign interference through social media is... one of Australia's most pressing security challenges.' It noted that 'the unique national security risks posed by social media companies like TikTok and WeChat' were of particular concern as 'the Chinese government can require these social media companies to secretly cooperate with Chinese intelligence agencies.'³³

Earlier this year, the US passed a bill requiring ByteDance, TikTok's parent company owned and headquartered in China, to divest TikTok within six months or face a US ban.³⁴ This was signed into law by President Joe Biden in April.³⁵ There have been some calls within the opposition for the Australian Labor government to follow suit.³⁶ Prime Minister Albanese indicated there were no plans to move beyond measures already in place based on advice from government security agencies, although such advice remained 'ongoing'.³⁷

Director-General of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) Mike Burgess, in his annual threat assessment in February 2024, said that espionage and foreign interference had 'surpassed terrorism as Australia's principal security concern'. While he did not name China directly, espionage and interference by the nation was a central focus.³⁸

Last year, accommodation used by a visiting Chinese academic on a research trip in Australia was raided by ASIO and the Australian Federal Police.³⁹ In February 2024, a Victorian businessperson became the first person tried and convicted under Australia's foreign interference laws, which had been passed in 2018. He was found guilty of the offence of planning to commit an act of foreign interference to advance the aims of the Chinese Communist Party and sentenced to two years and nine months imprisonment, with possible release after serving a year and with the payment of a \$3,000 four-year good behaviour bond.⁴⁰ Separately, a Sydney businessperson is currently, at the time of writing this report, in custody awaiting trial on a charge of reckless foreign interference.⁴¹



3.2 Security and stability

‘China is a security threat to Australia’

About seven in 10 Australians (71 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed in 2023 (72 percent) and 2022 (73 percent), and still up from a low of 67 percent in 2021. Nineteen percent expressed neutrality and 10 percent disagreed (Figure 13).

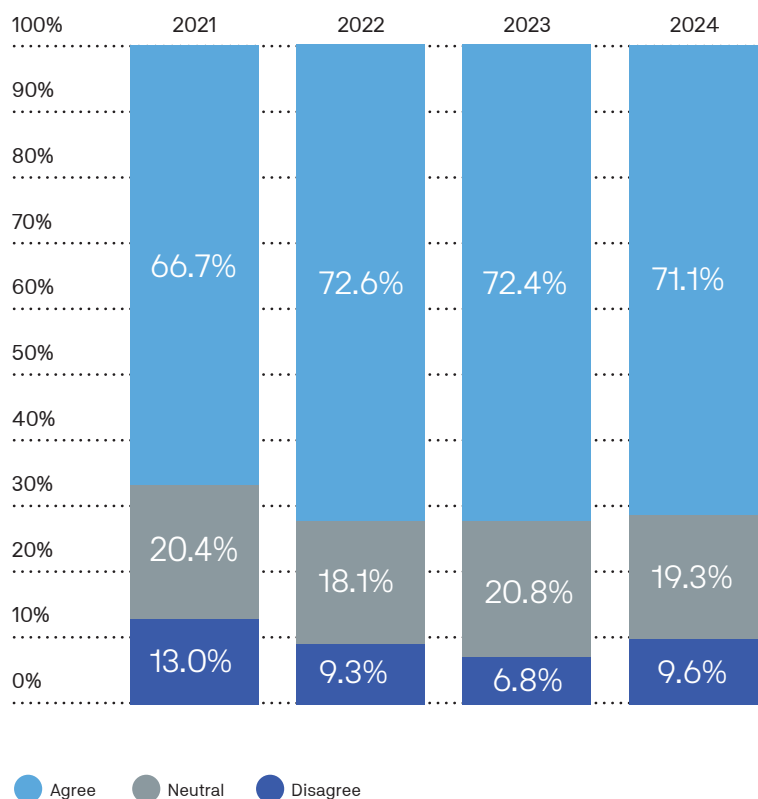
A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (86 percent) were more likely to agree.

An education divide: Australians who completed high school (93 percent) as their highest level of education were more likely to agree. Those who completed a bachelor’s degree (58 percent) were less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (83 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 13. **China as a security threat**

China is a security threat to Australia

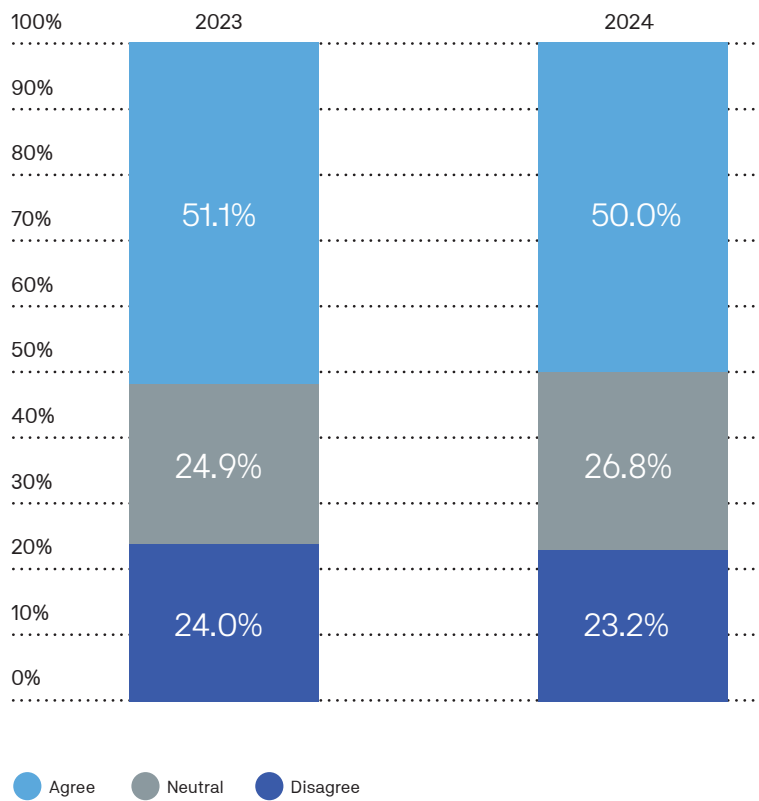


‘Military conflict with China within three years is a serious possibility’

Half of Australians (50 percent) agreed, a continuation of views expressed in 2023 (51 percent). Twenty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 23 percent disagreed (Figure 14).

Figure 14. **Possibility of military conflict with China within three years**

Military conflict with China within three years is a serious possibility



‘The Australian government is right to increase defence spending, to balance, among other considerations, China’s growing military might’

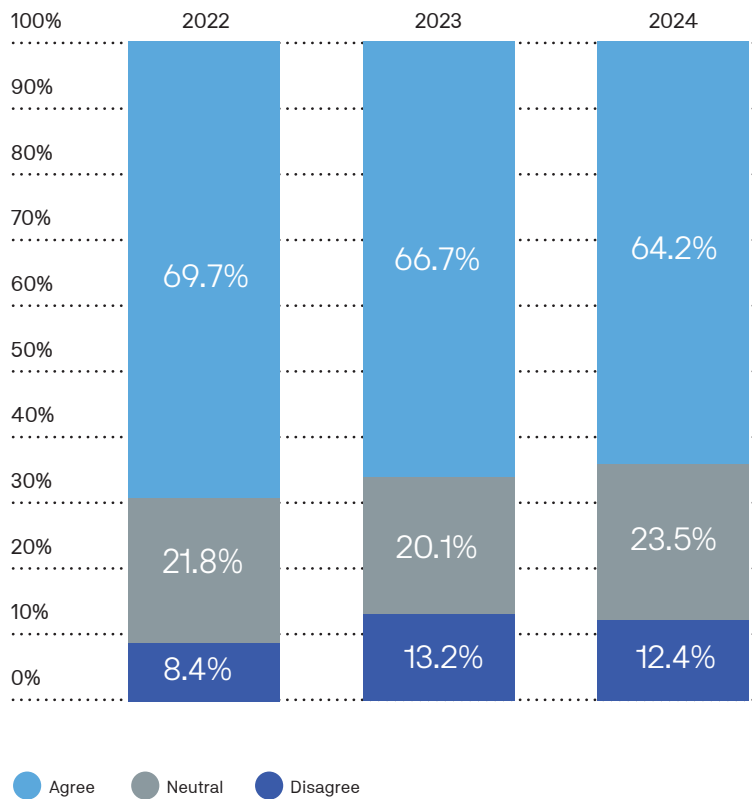
Sixty-four percent of Australians agreed, with the last three years seeing a steady drop in support – 67 percent had expressed agreement in 2023 and 70 percent in 2022. Twenty-four percent expressed neutrality and 12 percent disagreed (Figure 15).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (78 percent) were more likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (73 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 15. **Support for an increase in Australia’s defence spending**

The Australian government is right to increase defence spending, to balance, among other considerations, China’s growing military might



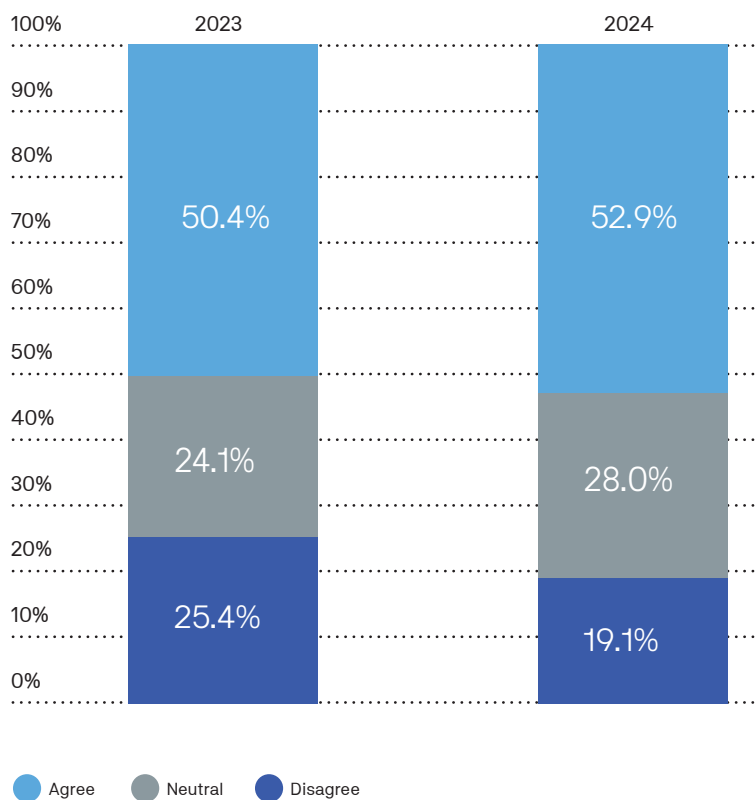
‘The Australian government is right to increase defence spending, even if it means budget cuts in other areas, for example health and education, to balance, among other considerations, China’s growing military might’

Just over half of Australians (53 percent) agreed, a three-point increase from 2023 (50 percent). Twenty-eight percent expressed neutrality and 19 percent disagreed (Figure 16).

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (69 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 16. **Support for an increase in Australia’s defence spending even if it means budget cuts in other areas**

The Australian government is right to increase defence spending, even if it means budget cuts in other areas, for example health and education, to balance, among other considerations, China’s growing military might



‘The Australian government’s plan to acquire nuclear submarines under the Australia–UK–US (AUKUS) trilateral security partnership will help keep Australia secure from a military threat from China’

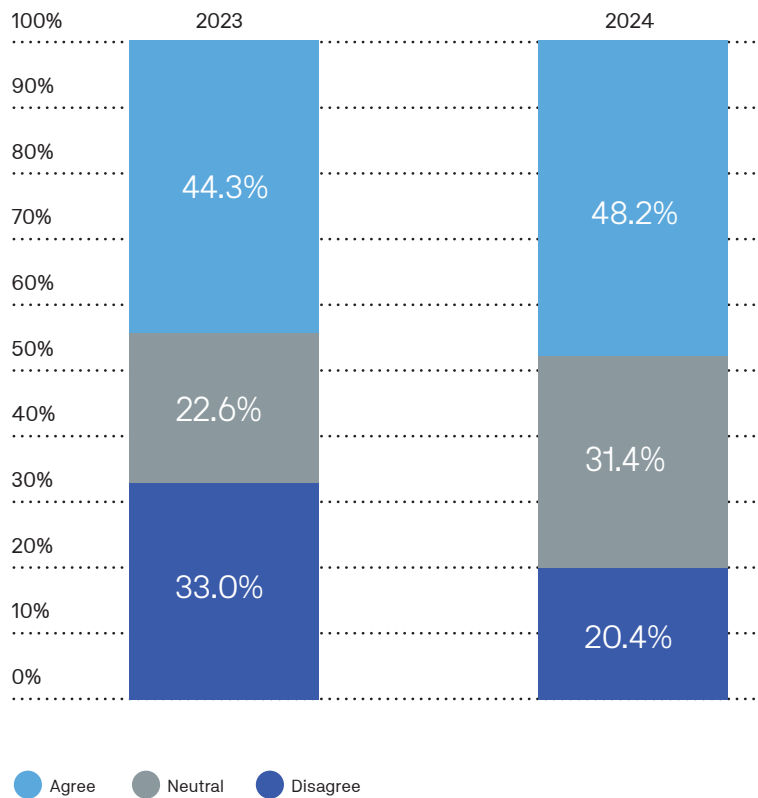
Nearly half of Australians (48 percent) agreed, a four-point increase from 2023 (44 percent). Thirty-one percent expressed neutrality and 20 percent disagreed (Figure 17).

A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (71 percent) were significantly more likely to agree. Australian Capital Territory residents (29 percent) were significantly less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (64 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 17. Acquisition of nuclear submarines under AUKUS

The Australian government’s plan to acquire nuclear submarines under the Australia–UK–US (AUKUS) trilateral security partnership will help keep Australia secure from a military threat from China

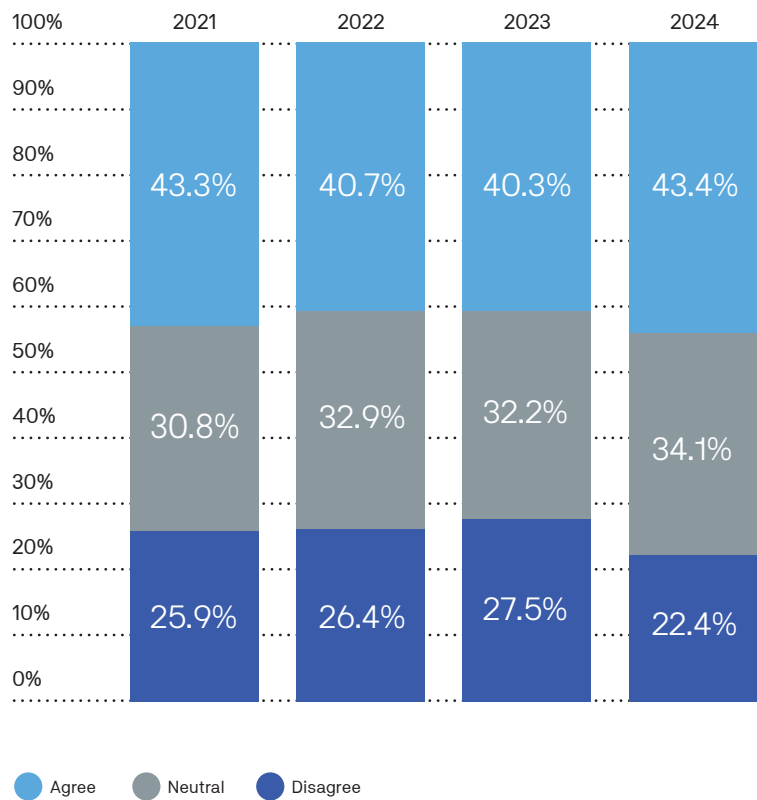


‘Australia should form trade and security blocs with other countries that deliberately exclude China’

Four in 10 Australians (43 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years. Thirty-four percent expressed neutrality and 22 percent disagreed (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Trade and security blocs

Australia should form trade and security blocs with other countries that deliberately exclude China

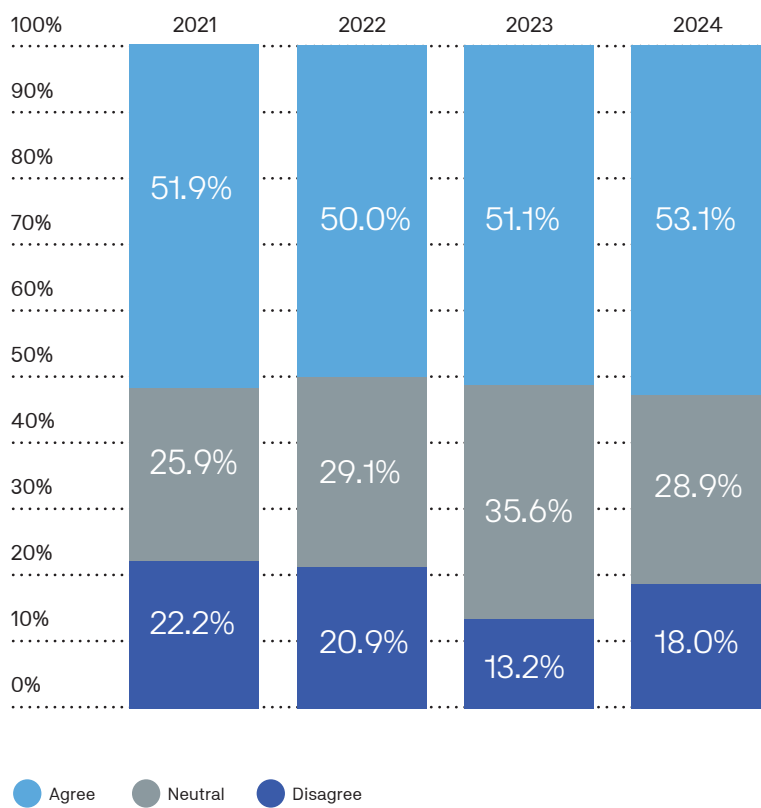


‘Australia’s relationship with China contributes to regional stability and security’

Just over half of Australians (53 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years. Twenty-nine percent expressed neutrality and 18 percent disagreed (Figure 19).

Figure 19. **Regional stability and security**

Australia’s relationship with China contributes to regional stability and security



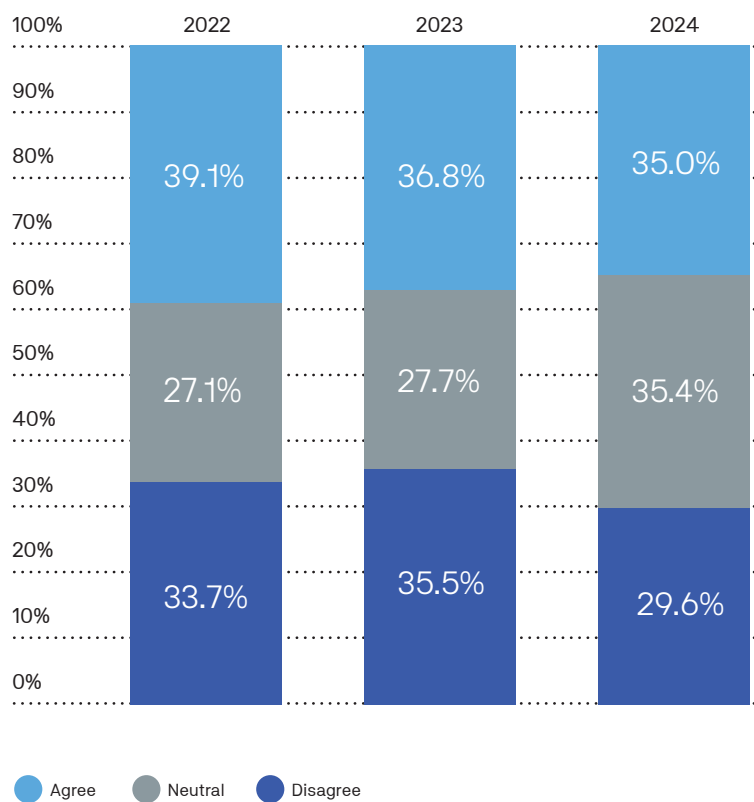
3.3 Conflict over Taiwan

'If China launches a military attack on Taiwan, Australia should send troops to go to Taiwan's defence'

Thirty-five percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a steady decrease in agreement with this view over the last three years, down from 37 percent in 2023 and 39 percent in 2022. Thirty-five percent expressed neutrality and 30 percent disagreed (Figure 20).

Figure 20. Defence of Taiwan

If China launches a military attack on Taiwan, Australia should send troops to go to Taiwan's defence



‘In the event of military conflict between United States and China over Taiwan, Australia should remain neutral’

Forty-three percent of Australians agreed. Agreement with this view has fluctuated somewhat over the last four years, but this year’s result is still down from a high of 53 percent in 2021. Twenty-seven percent of Australians expressed neutrality and 30 percent disagreed (Figure 21).

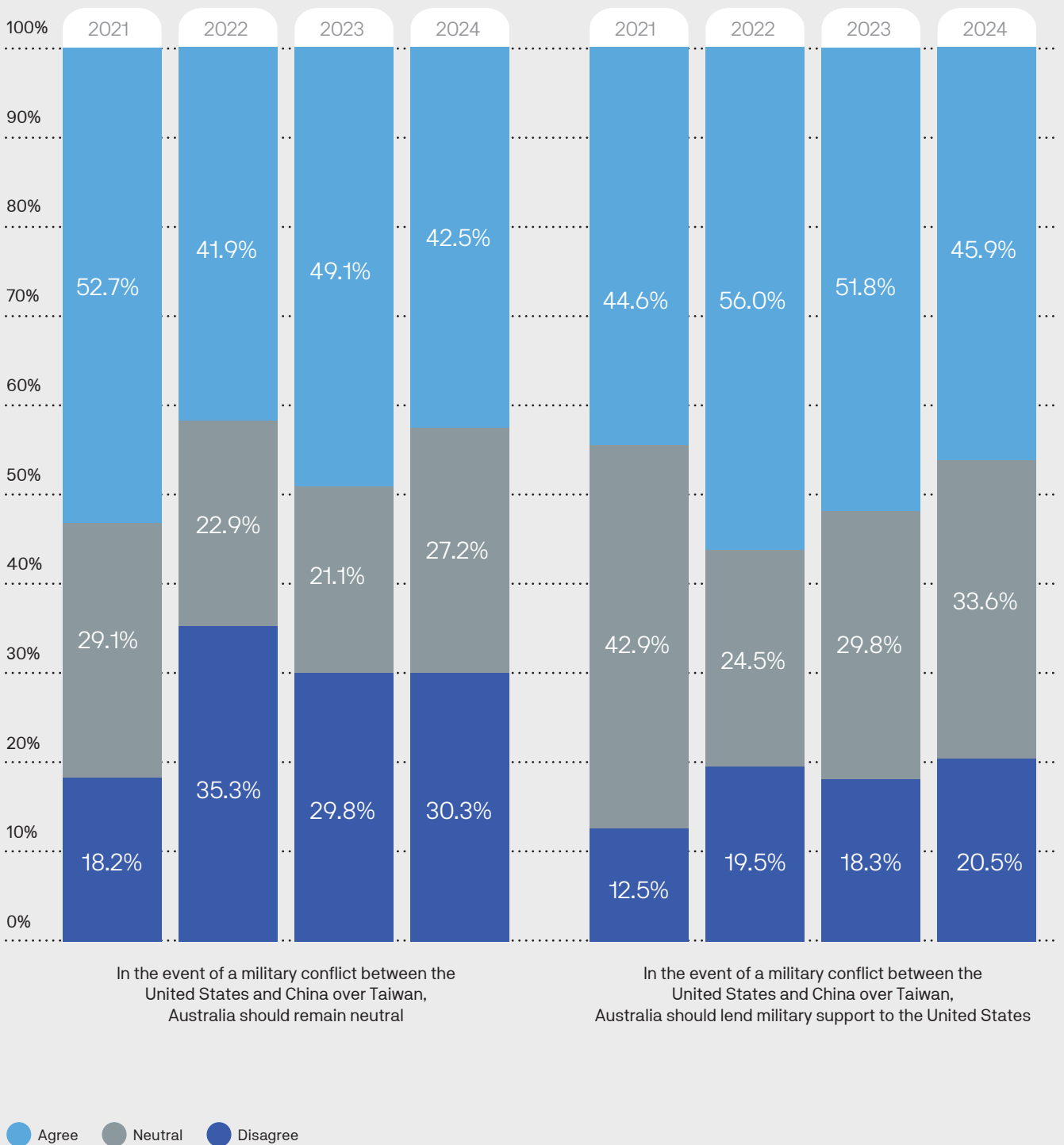
A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (17 percent) were significantly less likely to agree.

‘In the event of a military conflict between China and the United States over Taiwan, Australia should lend military support to the United States’

Forty-six percent of Australians agreed, a six-point decrease from 2023 (52 percent) and a 10-point decrease from 2022 (56 percent) almost meeting a 45 percent low from 2021. Thirty-four percent of Australians expressed neutrality and 21 percent disagreed (Figure 21).

A state/territory divide: Queensland residents (58 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 21. Conflict over Taiwan between the US and China



3.4 Cybersecurity

‘Australia should ban Chinese-owned apps such as TikTok and WeChat’

About six in 10 Australians (59 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed in 2023 (61 percent) and still up from a low of 47 percent in 2022. Twenty-six percent expressed neutrality and 15 percent disagreed (Figure 22).

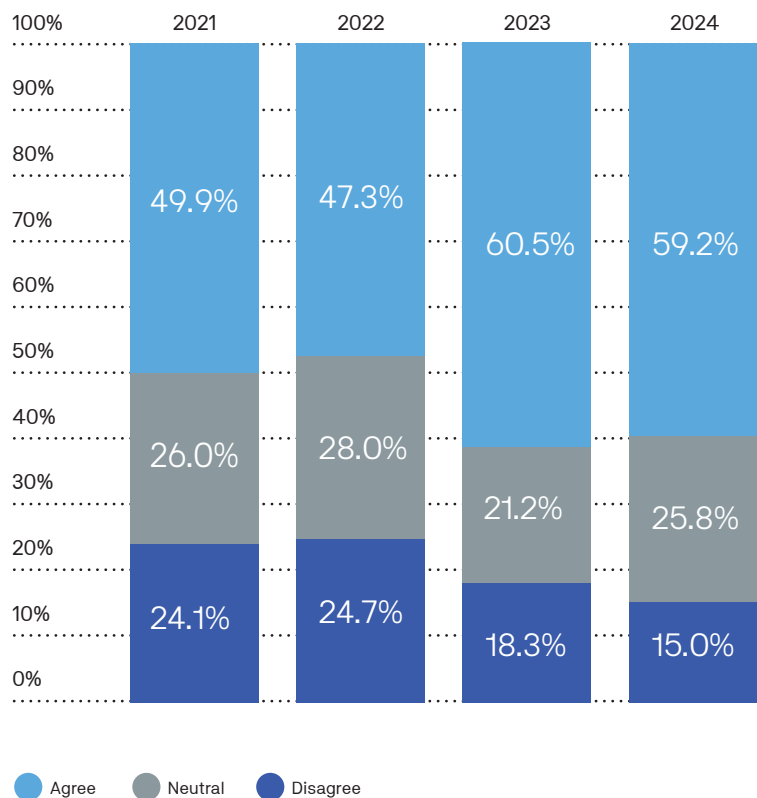
An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (66 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (49 percent) were less likely to agree.

An education divide: Australians who completed a certificate, trade or diploma (65 percent) as their highest level of education were more likely to agree. Those who completed a bachelor’s degree (54 percent) were less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (67 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 22. **Support for banning apps such as TikTok and WeChat**

Australia should ban Chinese-owned apps such as TikTok and WeChat



‘The Australian government is right to publicly call out any Chinese state-sponsored cybersecurity attacks on Australia’s digital systems’

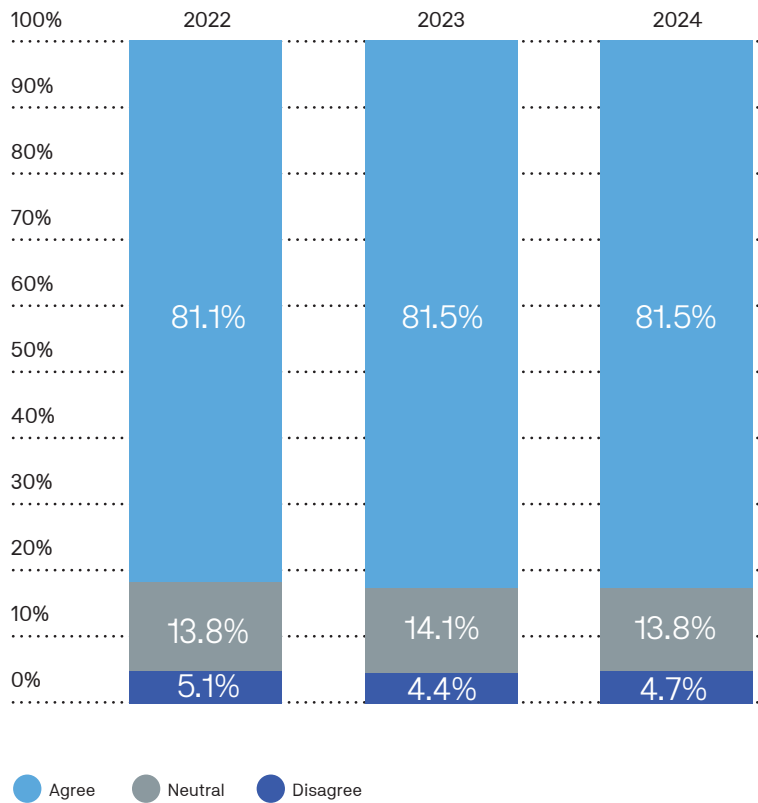
Just over eight in 10 Australians (82 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last three years. Fourteen percent expressed neutrality and five percent disagreed (Figure 23).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (91 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (69 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (93 percent) and Northern Territory residents (91 percent) were more likely to agree. New South Wales residents (77 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 23. Public attribution of Chinese state-sponsored cybersecurity attacks

The Australian government is right to publicly call out any Chinese state-sponsored cybersecurity attacks on Australia’s digital systems



3.5 Espionage and foreign interference

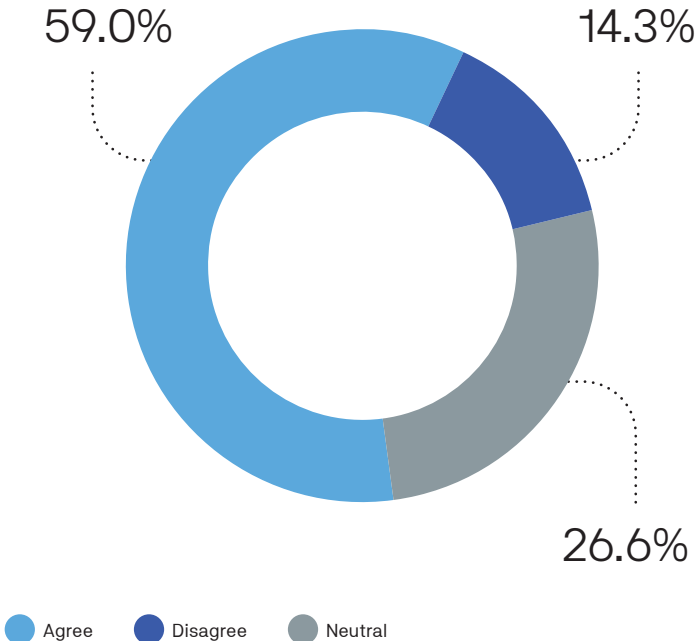
‘Espionage conducted by China against Australia is more concerning than espionage against Australia conducted by other countries’

Nearly six in 10 Australians (59 percent) agreed. Twenty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 14 percent disagreed (Figure 24).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18–34 (48 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 24. **Espionage conducted by China**

Espionage conducted by China against Australia is more concerning than espionage against Australia conducted by other countries



‘Espionage against Australia conducted by China is a major problem’

Just over two-thirds of Australians (67 percent) agreed. Twenty-five percent expressed neutrality and seven percent disagreed (Figure 25).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (75 percent) were more likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (73 percent) were more likely to agree.

‘Espionage against Australia conducted by the United States is a major problem’

Nearly four in 10 Australians (39 percent) agreed. Thirty-five percent expressed neutrality and 26 percent disagreed (Figure 25).

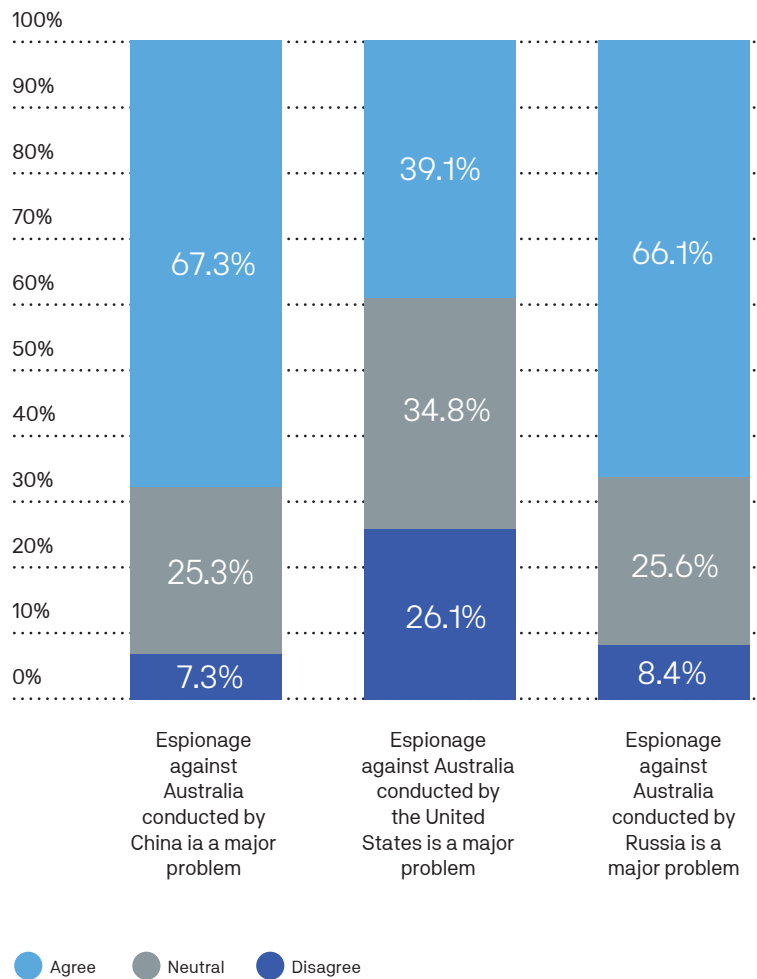
An age divide: Australians aged 35–55 (52 percent) were more likely to agree. Older Australians aged 55+ (28 percent) were less likely to agree.

‘Espionage against Australia conducted by Russia is a major problem’

Two-thirds of Australians (66 percent) agreed. Twenty-six percent expressed neutrality and eight percent disagreed (Figure 25).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (76 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (55 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 25. **Espionage – Country comparisons**



An education divide: Australians who completed high school (76 percent) as their highest level of education were more likely to agree.

‘The Australian government is successfully responding to espionage conducted by China against Australia’

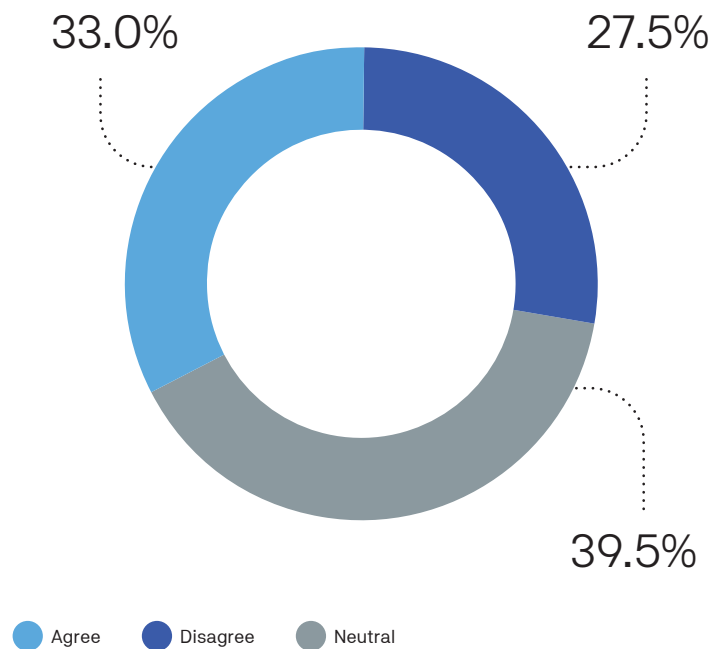
One-third of Australians (33 percent) agreed. Forty percent expressed neutrality and 28 percent disagreed (Figure 26).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (30 percent) were less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (37 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 26. **The Australian government’s response to espionage conducted by China against Australia**

The Australian government is successfully responding to espionage conducted by China against Australia



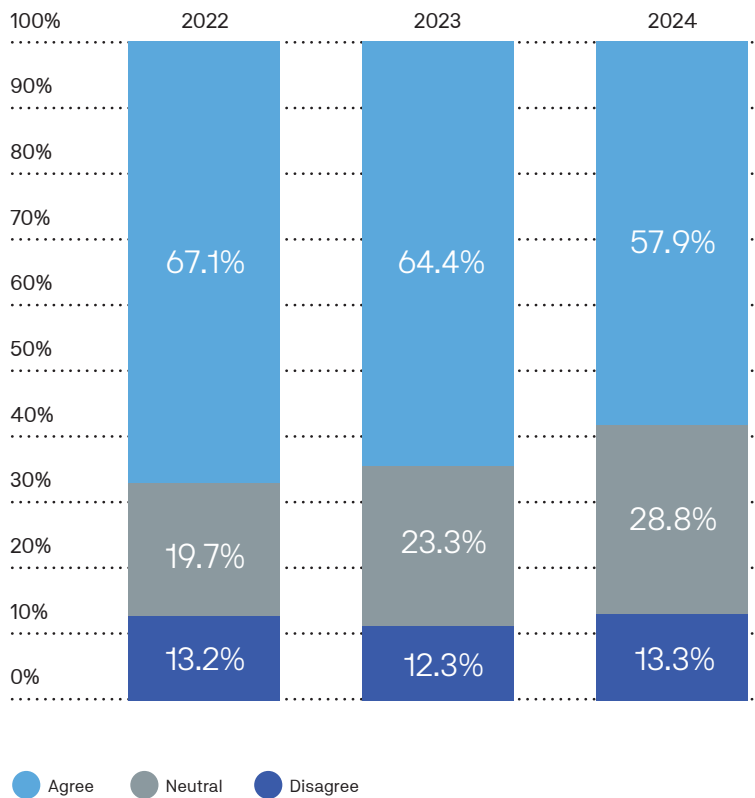
'Foreign interference in Australia stemming from China is more concerning than foreign interference from other countries'

Fifty-eight percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a steady decrease in agreement with this view over the last three years, down from 64 percent in 2023 and 67 percent in 2022. Twenty-nine percent of Australians expressed neutrality and 13 percent disagreed (Figure 27).

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (71 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 27. Foreign interference stemming from China as more of a concern than foreign interference from other countries

Foreign interference stemming from China is more concerning than foreign interference from other countries



‘Foreign interference in Australia stemming from China is a major problem’

About two-thirds of Australians (65 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed in 2023 (64 percent), down from 69 percent in 2022 and a high of 72 percent in 2021. Twenty-five percent expressed neutrality and 10 percent disagreed (Figure 28).

‘Foreign interference in Australia stemming from the United States is a major problem’

Forty-three percent of Australians agreed, a continuation of views from 2023 (43 percent), up from 2022 (39 percent) and 2021 (37 percent). One-third (33 percent) expressed neutrality and 24 percent disagreed (Figure 28).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (37 percent) were less likely to agree.

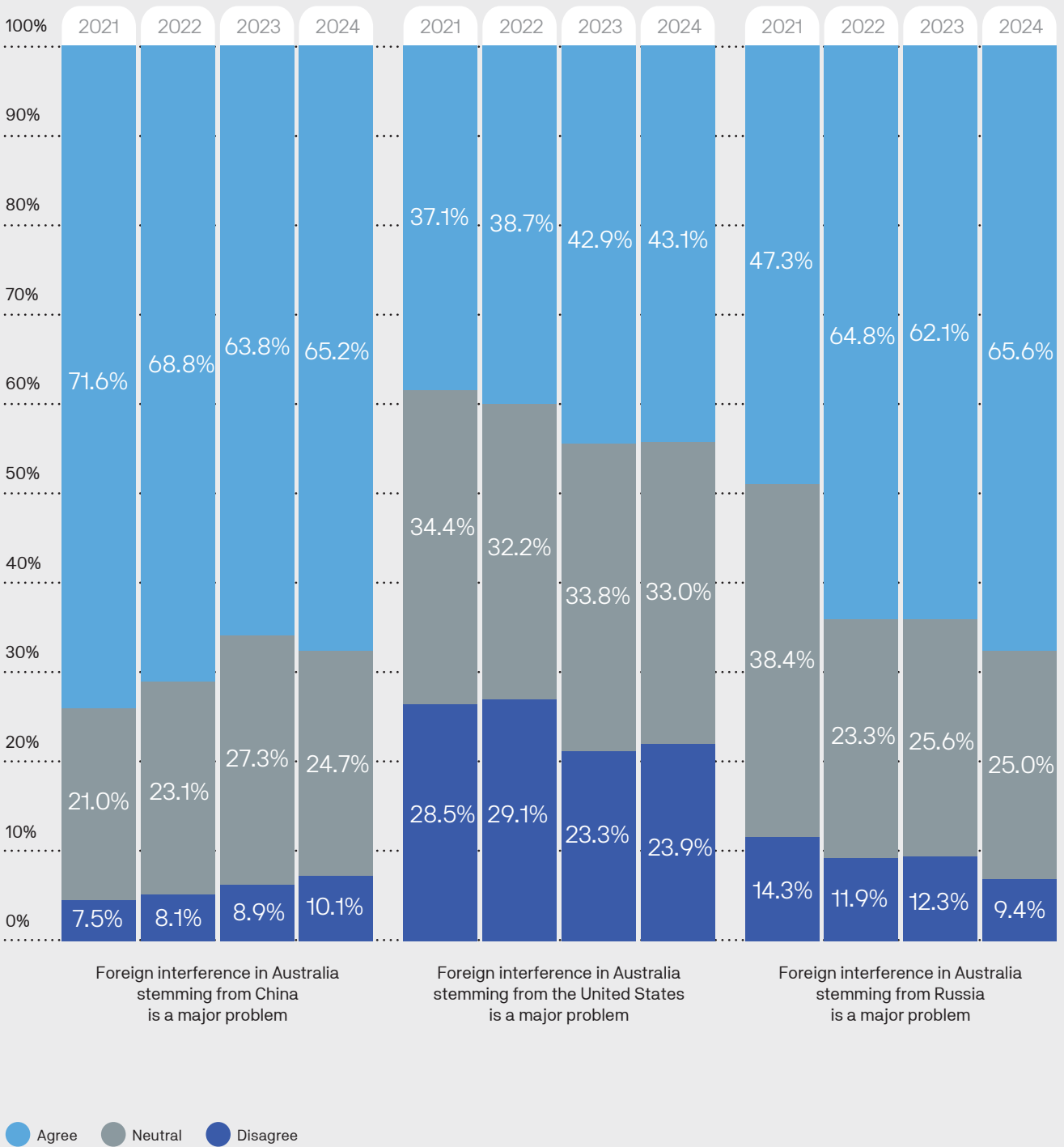
A state/territory divide: Tasmania residents (59 percent) were more likely to agree.

‘Foreign interference in Australia stemming from Russia is a major problem’

Two-thirds of Australians (66 percent) agreed, slightly up from 2023 (62 percent) and 2022 (65 percent), and up 19 points from 2021 (47 percent). Twenty-five expressed neutrality and nine percent disagreed (Figure 28).

A state/territory divide: Northern Territory residents (86 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 28. Foreign interference – Country comparisons



‘The Australian government is successfully responding to Chinese government interference in Australia’

Just over one-third of Australians (34 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years. Thirty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 30 percent disagreed (Figure 29).

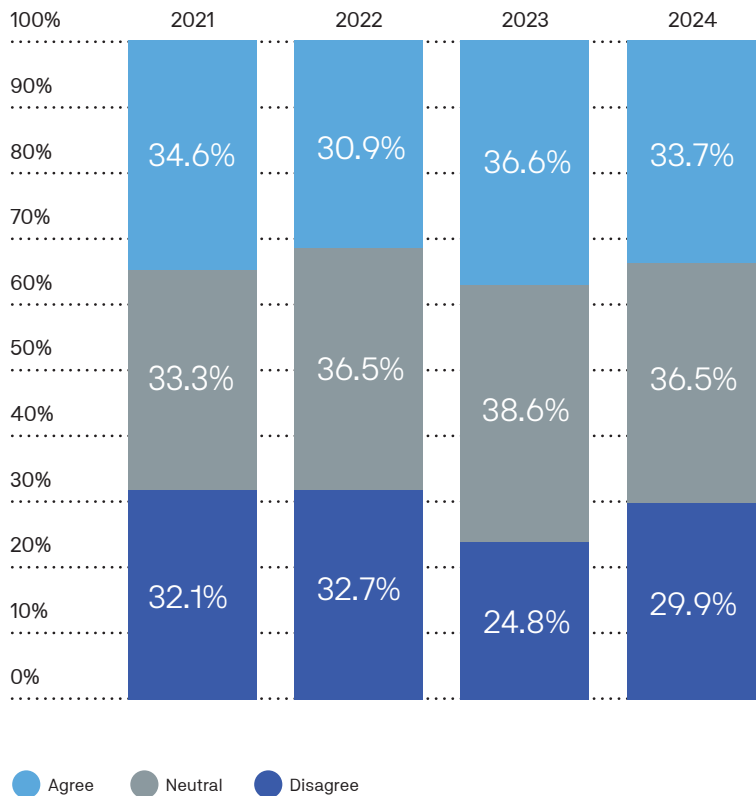
An age divide: Australians aged 35–55 (40 percent) were more likely to agree. Older Australians aged 55+ (31 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Queensland residents (43 percent) were more likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (46 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 29. The Australian government’s response to Chinese government interference in Australia

The Australian government is successfully responding to Chinese government interference in Australia



3.6 The Belt and Road Initiative

‘The Australian government is right not to sign up to/participate in China’s Belt and Road Initiative’

Just over half of Australians (53 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years. Thirty-nine percent expressed neutrality and seven percent disagreed (Figure 30).

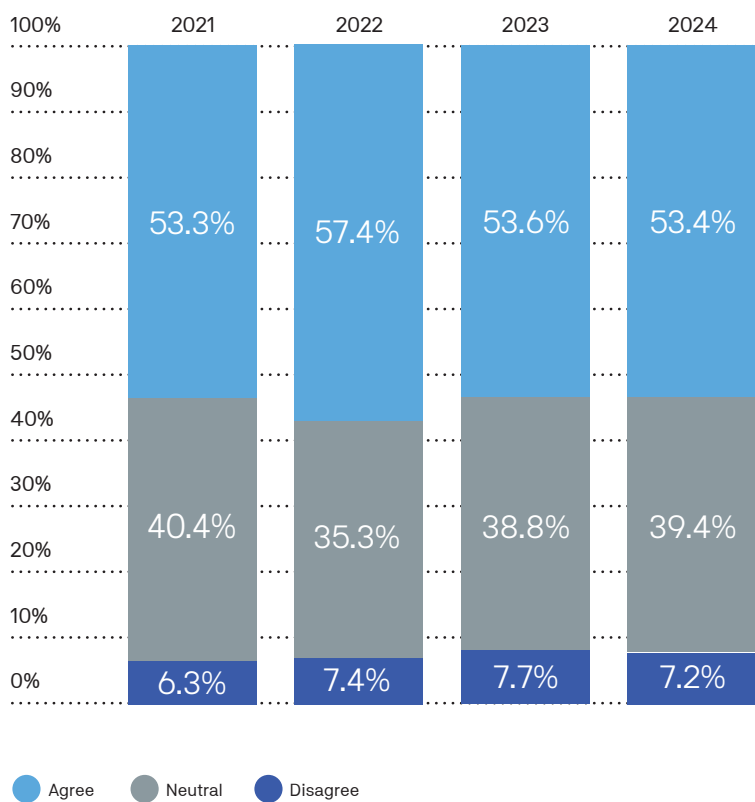
An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (65 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (38 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: South Australia residents (37 percent) were less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (64 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 30. **The Belt and Road Initiative**

The Australian government is right not to sign up to/participate in China’s Belt and Road Initiative



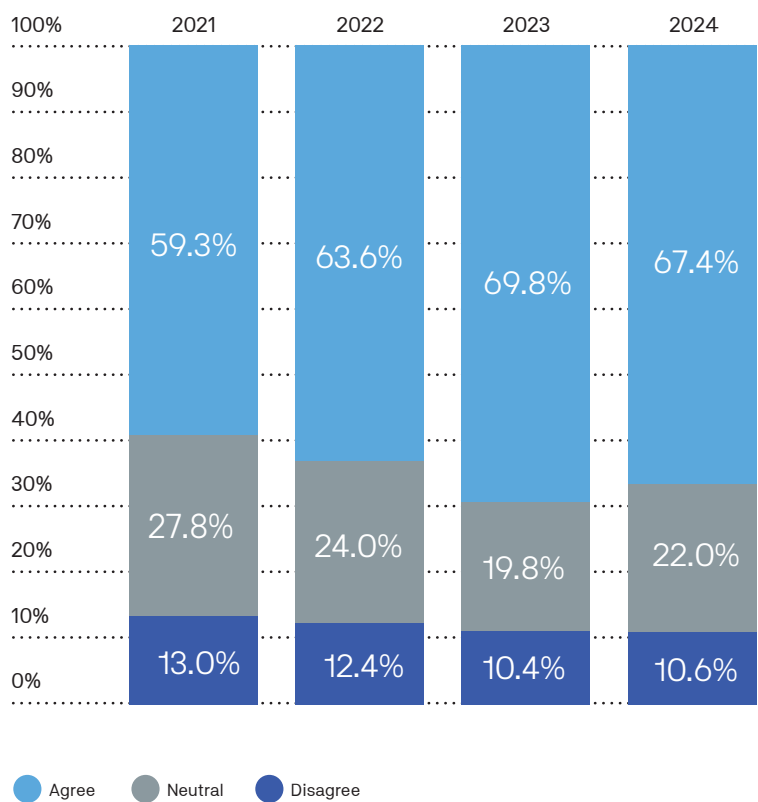
3.7 The South China Sea

‘China’s artificial island-building in the South China Sea is a threat to Australia’s security’

Just over two-thirds of Australians (68 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last three years and still up from a low of 59 percent in 2021. Twenty-two percent expressed neutrality and 11 percent disagreed (Figure 31).

Figure 31. **The South China Sea**

China’s artificial island-building in the South China Sea is a threat to Australia’s security



4. The United States



4.1 Background

Prime Minister Albanese characterised the ‘heart’ of the US alliance as ‘[n]ot a pact against a common enemy’, but rather ‘a pledge to a common cause’.⁴²

Australia and the US have continued to deepen alliance ties on a number of fronts, particularly through the AUKUS security partnership. Former defence minister Kim Beazley made the observation last year that Australia is now ‘totally dependent on the United States’ in defence.⁴³

During the 33rd Australia–United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) in July 2023, both nations recommitted to ‘operationalis[ing] the alliance’, agreeing to rotate US Navy Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft in Australia and for US military analysts to be embedded in Australia’s Defence Intelligence Organisation.⁴⁴ Both nations have also continued engagement through the Quad, trilateral security dialogue with Japan and multilateral defence cooperation with Japan and the Philippines, among other fora.

Tensions continue to simmer between the US and China, with President Xi accusing the US of ‘containment, encirclement and suppression’.⁴⁵ China’s Foreign Ministry in February 2023 published a 4,000-word paper taking aim at ‘US hegemony and its perils’.⁴⁶ Lawmakers in Washington are united in viewing Beijing as a threat to the US domestically, as well as to the global order.⁴⁷

Both nations, however, have also addressed a communication breakdown and reinstated dialogue. In April 2024, President Biden stated that he and President Xi had agreed ‘that we would, number one, have personal contact with one another whenever we want to discuss... anything’ so that ‘nothing slips between... the cup and the lip, so we know exactly what the other team is thinking.’ He stated that this was ‘the best way to reduce the chances of miscalculation and misunderstanding’.⁴⁸

Australia faces increasing pressures in navigating its relationships with the US and China. A technological race between the US and China is intensifying, with both sides implementing various tech export controls. A presidential race between Biden and Donald Trump seems to be all but guaranteed, prompting concerns about what a Trump victory may mean for AUKUS and for the alliance more broadly.⁴⁹

Prime Minister Albanese and his senior ministers, however, have played down the potential impact of a return of Trump to the White House.⁵⁰

The Labor government has consistently emphasised the importance of guardrails between the US and China,⁵¹ seeking to lower the temperature in the relationship between the two powers. Prime Minister Albanese has rejected the inevitability of conflict, saying, ‘[T]he fate of our region is not pre-ordained’.⁵² He also said that Australia says ‘the same thing to the same people’ – i.e., the US and China – ‘in a consistent way’.⁵³

Australia and the US have continued to engage in cooperation on a number of initiatives implicitly and explicitly motivated by concerns about Beijing, its actions and intentions,⁵⁴ although Australia has thus far refrained from adopting American rhetoric on China and has continued to engage in trade even as Washington seeks to reduce economic engagement with China.

A journalist put to Foreign Minister Wong that ‘Australia and the US have been moving at different speeds on their relationship with China. Australia’s been moving much closer, much warmer towards China compared to the US who’ve had a few problems recently.’ She disagreed with the characterisation, saying that she believed the Australian approach was ‘very consistent with the Biden administration’s approach to the China relationship’ although ‘[t]he language is a little different’.⁵⁵

This was reflected in last year’s AUSMIN, with references to Beijing’s ‘bullying behaviour’, ‘economic coercion’ and ‘threats’ featuring in US State Secretary Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III’s set-piece remarks and opening statements to the press, while Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Marles and Foreign Minister Wong made no direct mention of China in theirs.⁵⁶

Australia and the US remain more or less substantively aligned. President Biden, asked whether Australia could ‘trust’ Beijing, replied, ‘Trust but verify is the phrase’.⁵⁷ Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Marles subsequently stated, ‘I think that advice is right’.⁵⁸

4.2 Balancing Australia's relationships with the United States and China

'Australia can enjoy a good relationship with both China and the United States at the same time'

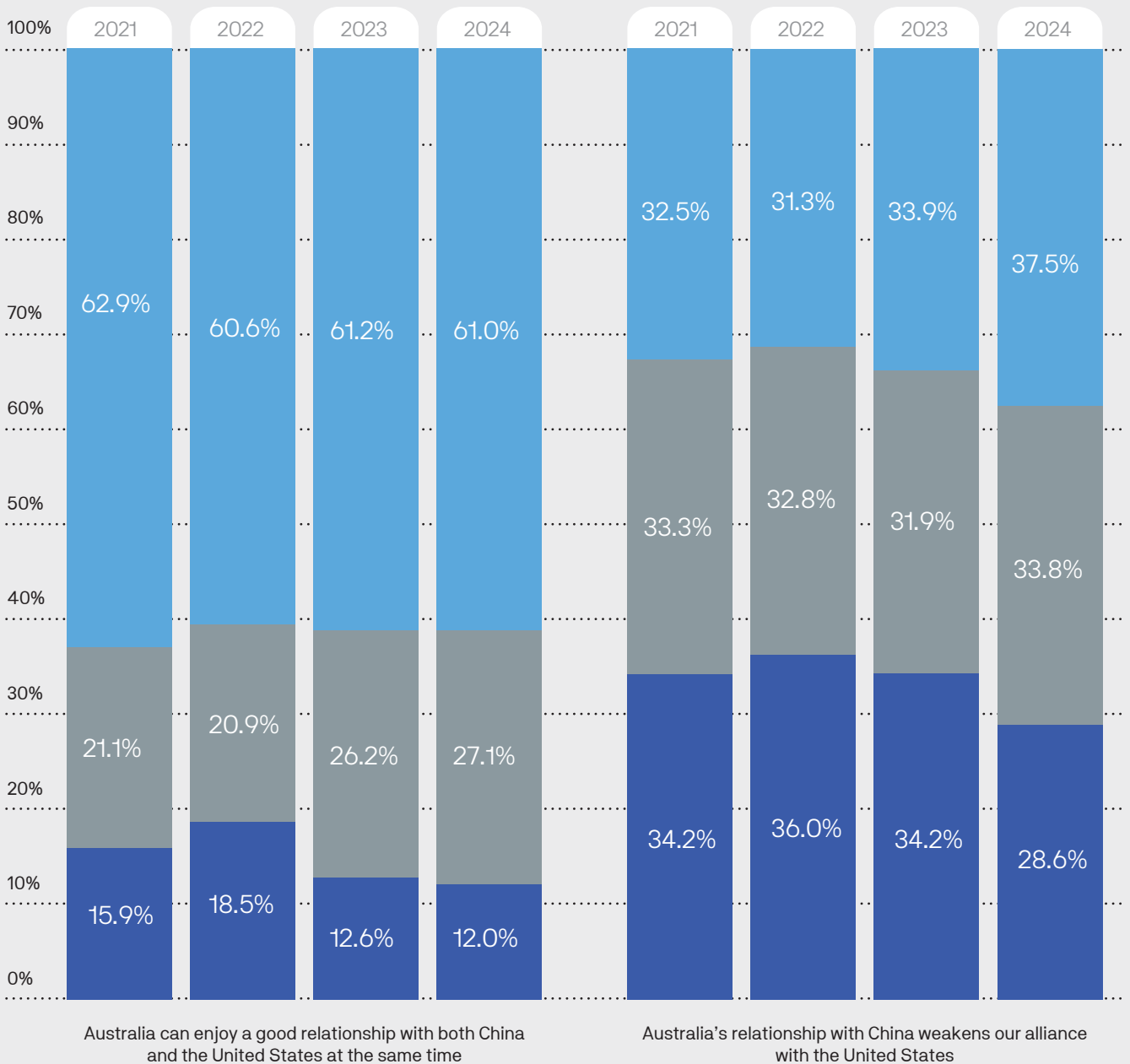
About six in 10 Australians (61 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years. Twenty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 12 percent disagreed (Figure 32).

'Australia's relationship with China weakens our alliance with the United States'

Nearly four in 10 Australians (38 percent) agreed, a four-point increase from 2023 and reflecting a four-year high. Thirty-four percent expressed neutrality and 29 percent disagreed (Figure 32).

An age divide: Australians aged 35–55 (45 percent) were more likely to agree. Older Australians aged 55+ (30 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 32. **Australia's relationships with the United States and China**



● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree

‘The United States will eventually force Australia to choose between a close relationship with Washington or a close relationship with Beijing’

Nearly half of Australians (47 percent) agreed, a continuation of views from 2023 (47 percent), up from a low of 39 percent in 2021. Thirty-two percent expressed neutrality and 21 percent disagreed (Figure 33).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (42 percent) were less likely to agree.

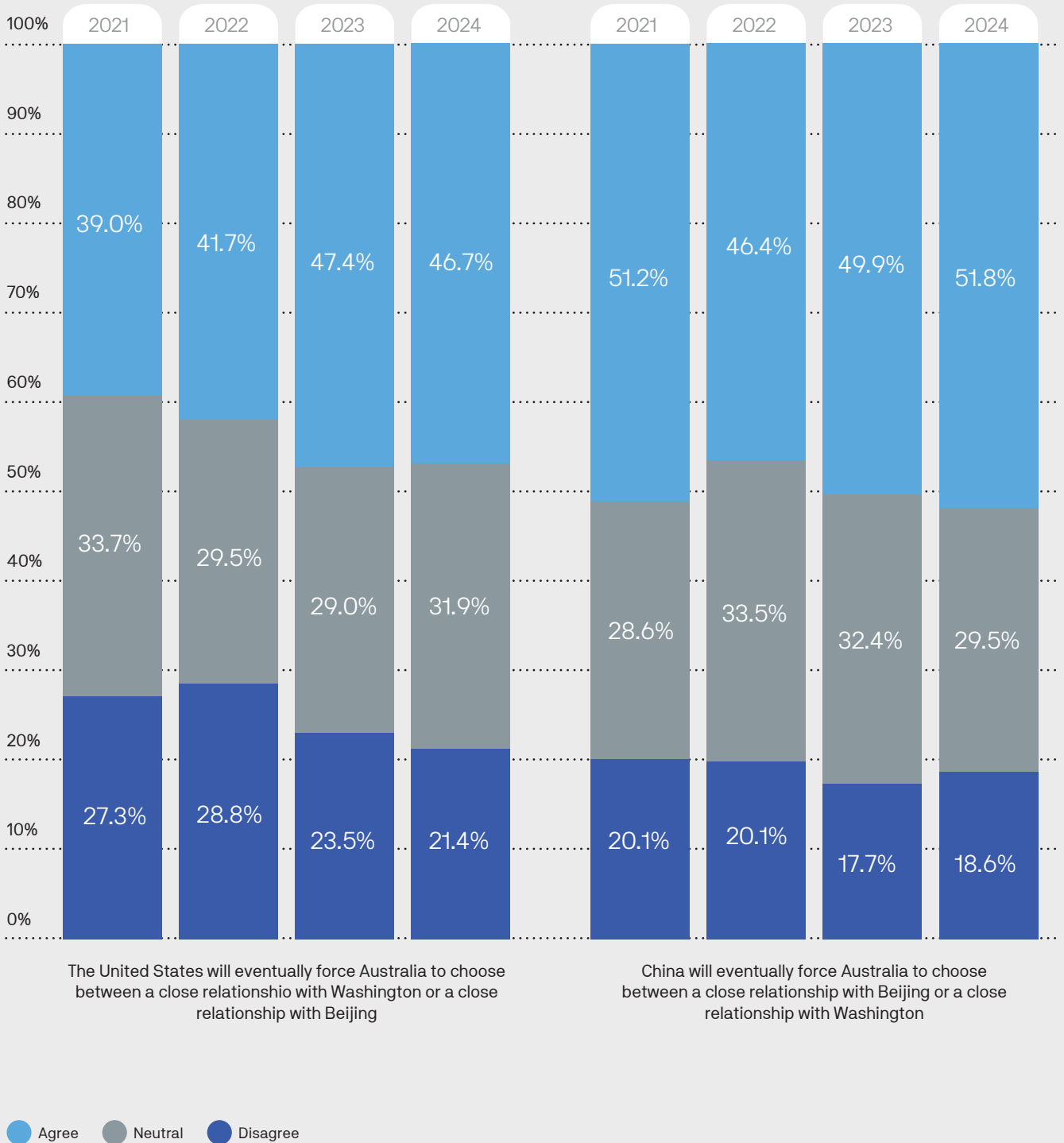
A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (36 percent) were less likely to agree.

‘China will eventually force Australia to choose between a close relationship with Beijing or a close relationship with Washington’

Just over half of Australians (52 percent) agreed, reflecting a four-year high. Thirty percent expressed neutrality and 19 percent disagreed (Figure 33).

A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (39 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 33. Forced to choose?



‘The Australian government’s balancing of its relationships with China and the US will be made more difficult if Donald Trump returns to the US presidency in 2024’

Just over two-thirds of Australians (67 percent) agreed. Twenty percent expressed neutrality and 13 percent disagreed (Figure 34).

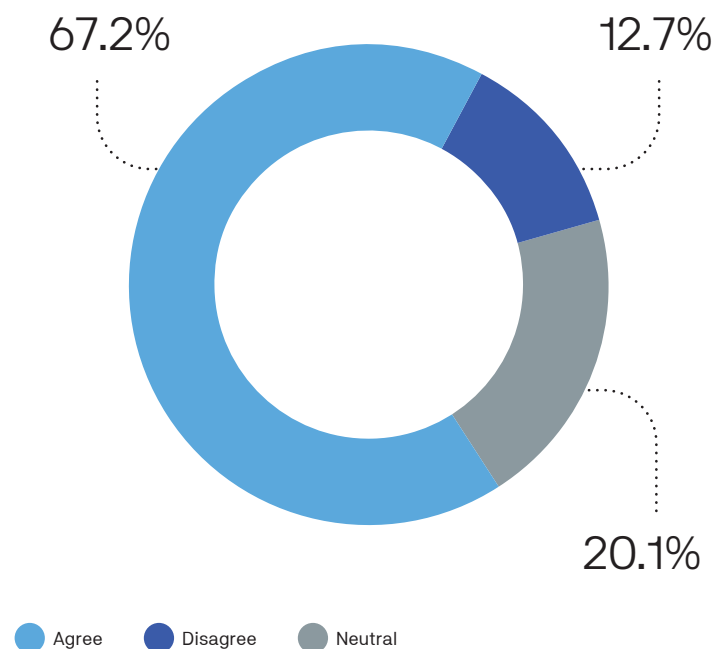
An age divide: Australians aged 35–55 (60 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Northern Territory residents (82 percent) were more likely to agree. Tasmania residents (51 percent) were less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (79 percent) were more likely to agree. Those who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (59 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 34. **The impact of a second Trump presidency**

The Australian government’s balancing of its relationships with China and the US will be made more difficult if Donald Trump returns to the US presidency in 2024



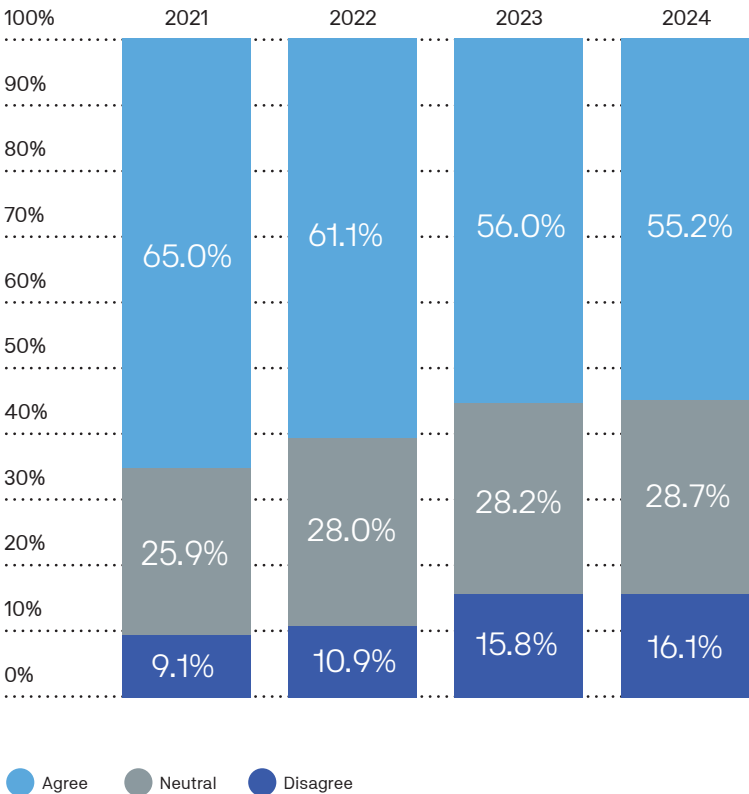
4.3 Influence in the region

‘China has more influence than the United States in Australia’s regional neighbourhood’

Over half of Australians (55 percent) agreed, reflecting a steady decrease in agreement with this view over the last four years, down from a high of 65 percent in 2021. Twenty-nine percent expressed neutrality and 16 percent disagreed (Figure 35).

Figure 35. The United States and China’s regional influence

China has more influence than the United States in Australia’s regional neighbourhood



4.4 Economic punishment over political disagreements

‘The United States government is willing to use its trade and investment ties with Australia to punish Australia over political disagreements’

Thirty-six percent of Australians agreed, a two-point increase from 2023 (34 percent) and three-point increase from 2022 and 2021 (both 33 percent). Thirty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 27 percent disagreed (Figure 36).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18–34 (42 percent) were more likely to agree. Older Australians aged 55+ (28 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Western Australia residents (49 percent) were more likely to agree. Australian Capital Territory residents (24 percent) were less likely to agree.

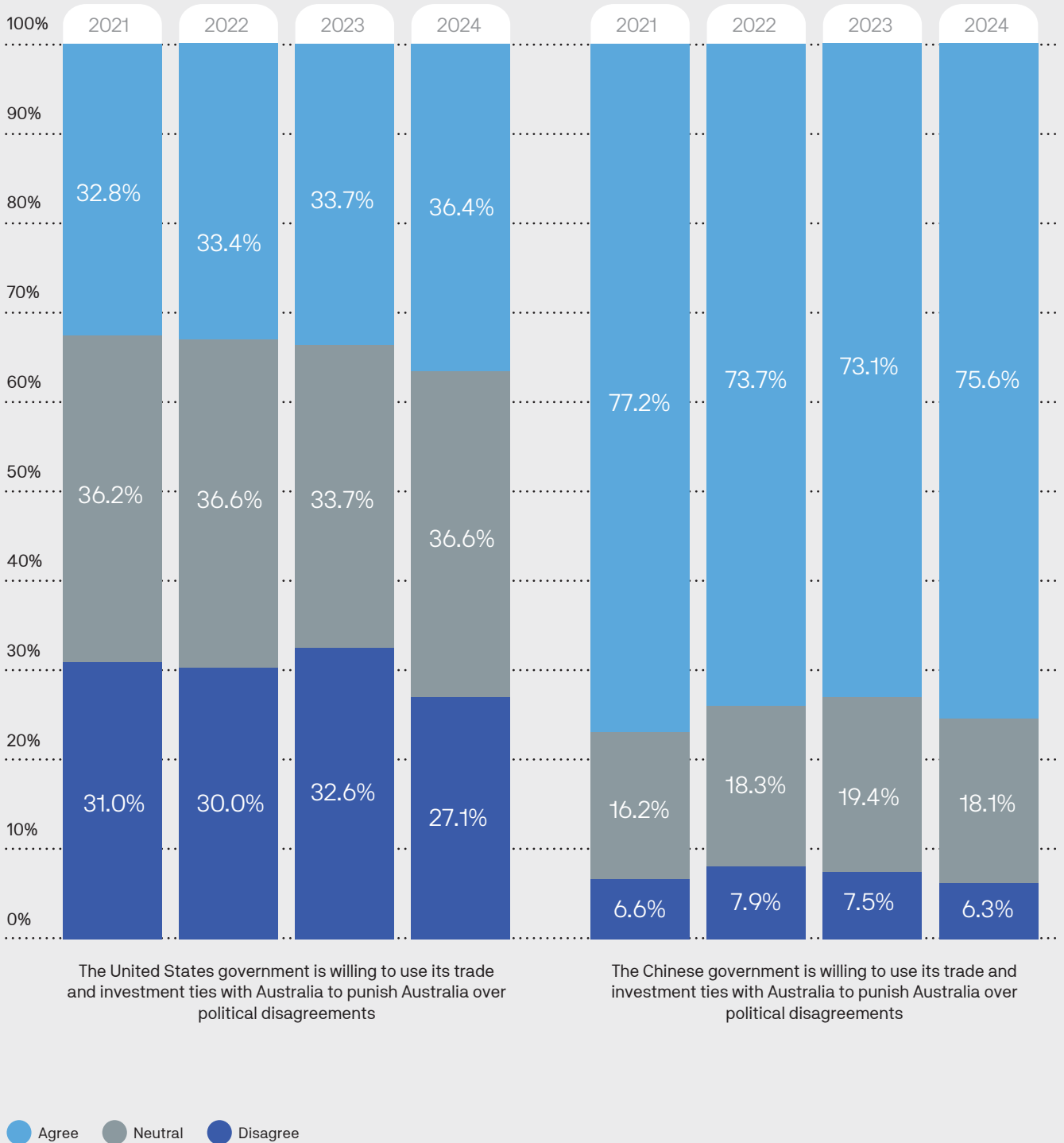
‘The Chinese government is willing to use its trade and investment ties with Australia to punish Australia over political disagreements’

Just over three-quarters of Australians (76 percent) agreed, a three-point increase from 2023 and almost matching the high of 77 percent in 2021. Eighteen percent expressed neutrality and six percent disagreed (Figure 36).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (85 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (62 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (86 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 36. The United States and China’s willingness to mete out economic punishment over political disagreements



5. Trade and investment

5.1 Background

2023 saw record highs in the value of Australia's exports to China, the bilateral trade surplus and total two-way trade. Over 2023 and 2024, Beijing continued to selectively remove the trade restrictions that had affected Australian exports since 2019, although some impediments remain.

Prime Minister Albanese and senior government ministers have underlined China's economic importance to Australia,⁵⁹ particularly as 'one in four Australian jobs is about trade'.⁶⁰ Trade Minister Farrell has repeatedly expressed the sentiment that 'we can do more and we can do better' in terms of two-way trade with China.⁶¹ In parallel, Canberra has continued efforts to diversify trade and reduce overreliance on the Chinese market in some sectors, particularly in critical minerals.

Beijing removed its 80.5 percent tariffs on Australian barley in August last year,⁶² and lifted its tariffs of up to 218 percent on Australian wine in March this year.⁶³ Each decision was followed by the discontinuation of Australian legal proceedings on each matter at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Australian winemakers welcomed the development but observed that it was unlikely for exports to return to pre-tariff levels in the short term, at minimum.⁶⁴ Australian federal, state and territory agriculture ministers have resolved to establish a wine sector working group to tackle a wine glut contributed to in large part by Beijing's tariffs.⁶⁵ Unlike the barley industry, which had been able to increase exports to other markets from \$400 million to \$3 billion,⁶⁶ Australia's wine industry faced difficulties finding other markets to fill the China gap.⁶⁷

According to industry sources, Australian timber exports have also been slow to resume⁶⁸ despite China having lifted its quarantine ban in May 2023.⁶⁹

Last year also saw China's General Administration of Customs allow in more Australian stonefruit, mangoes, cherries and citrus,⁷⁰ as well as Australia's re-addition to China's Approved Destination Status list, which permitted the resumption of group tours.⁷¹ Hay exports also resumed after two years of restrictions during which time Beijing had declined to renew most export licences.⁷² In December, China lifted its trade-related suspensions on three of Australia's largest abattoirs.⁷³

On January 1 this year, the remaining tariffs on Australian beef (ranging from 12 to 25 percent); and cheese, butter and yoghurt (10 to 15 percent) were eliminated under the terms of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA).⁷⁴

Tourism from China is rebounding post-COVID-19 pandemic, albeit at a slower rate than expected.⁷⁵ 2023 saw 507,000 tourist arrivals from China, which was 38 percent of December 2019 levels.⁷⁶ International students are also returning, with China remaining the top source market. Chinese students comprised 33 percent of the international student cohort last year.⁷⁷ Labor's new migration strategy, geared as it is towards reducing temporary migrant numbers, may impact Chinese student numbers in the near future.⁷⁸

Australian live lobster exports and several meat establishments remain subject to trade restrictions. Over 90 percent of Australian lobsters used to be sent to China before Beijing banned the good in 2020.⁷⁹

Australia's Anti-Dumping Commission in October 2023 recommended the removal of anti-dumping measures on wind towers from China,⁸⁰ accepted by Industry and Science Minister Ed Husic in March 2024.⁸¹ Later that same month, a WTO panel adjudicated in favour of China on some aspects of a case against Australia, initiated in June 2021, on anti-dumping duties on steel products such as wind towers, stainless steel sinks and railway wheels.⁸² The Australian government accepted the decision, waiving its right to appeal.⁸³

The Australian government has designated trade diversification the 'central plank' of its trade policy strategy,⁸⁴ while also ruling out decoupling.⁸⁵ A 2023 Productivity Commission report found that '[b]y providing access to a more diversified set of suppliers and customers, international trade can help moderate demand and supply shocks that emerge from time to time. The value of this flexibility was demonstrated from early 2020 when Australian exports to China were disrupted. While costly to some sectors, alternative markets were readily found for many exports, reducing the impacts on Australian businesses.'⁸⁶

While close trade linkages continue between Australia and China, a markedly different story has emerged with respect to Chinese investment in Australia, notwithstanding Beijing's push for greater investment access.⁸⁷

According to a report by KPMG and the University of Sydney, Chinese investment in Australia fell by 56 percent last year to \$917 million, the second lowest year in investment value since 2006. Eleven transactions across six industries were recorded.⁸⁸ The report noted that 'Food and agribusiness represented 40 percent of the overall value through three deals totalling AU\$363 million in cotton farming, pet food, and an iconic agriculture estate in Victoria.'⁸⁹

While Chinese investment in residential real estate continues to lead foreign residential real estate investment by country,⁹⁰ recent data has shown a marked downturn.⁹¹ *The Australian Financial Review* reported in March this year that middle-class Chinese are increasingly selling their properties.⁹²

The Australian government is engaging in a concerted effort to reduce reliance on China in critical minerals processing, a major objective of its *Critical Minerals Strategy 2023-2030*,⁹³ including through government financing⁹⁴ and via boosting foreign investment from nations other than China.⁹⁵ Resources Minister Madeleine King has been plain about the fact that Australia's objective was to 'compete' with China in the critical minerals sector.⁹⁶ While Prime Minister Albanese has stated that Australia would continue to review Chinese investment in critical minerals on a 'case-by-case' basis,⁹⁷ and Trade Minister Farrell has said that the government 'would not propose any changes' on this front,⁹⁸ substantive actions suggest the limitation of Chinese investment in this sector. The Treasurer blocked two proposed Chinese investments in critical minerals last year.⁹⁹

Beijing has also been tightening access to its critical minerals sector. It banned the export of technology for making rare earth magnets in mid-December 2023,¹⁰⁰ which followed in the wake of other newly introduced restrictions, including the requirement for export permits for gallium and germanium¹⁰¹ and two types of graphite.¹⁰²

However, while increasingly wary of investment from China, the Australian government accepted a recommendation from a Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet review which found that it was 'not necessary to vary or cancel' the 99-year lease of the Port of Darwin held by Chinese company Landbridge¹⁰³ despite the Australian Labor Party's opposition to it since 2015.¹⁰⁴

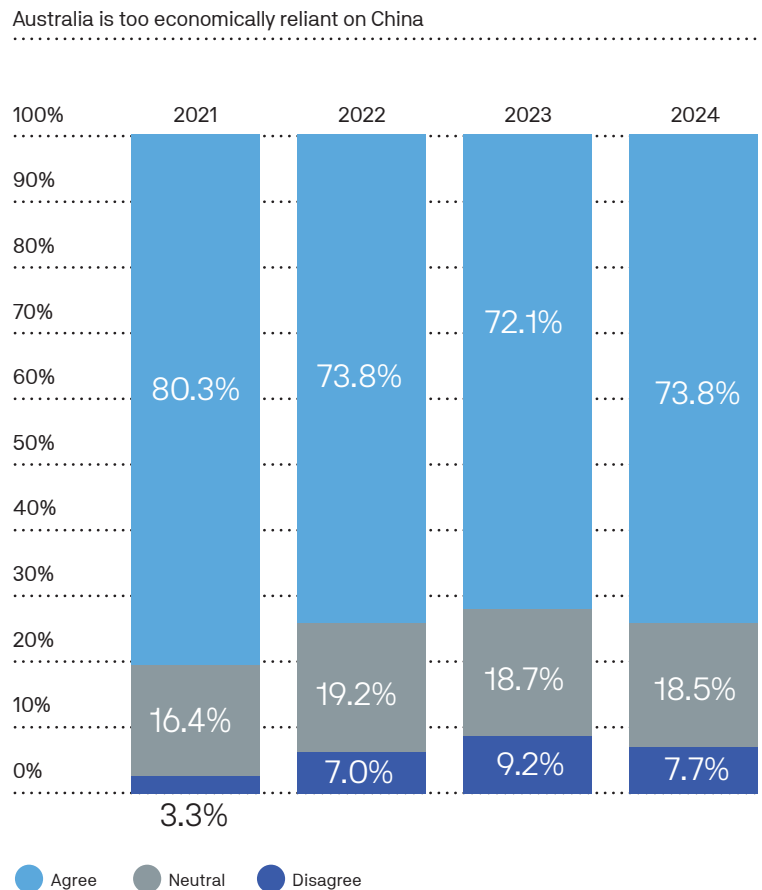
Beijing has indicated its intent to 'actively pursue' membership of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).¹⁰⁵ Taipei also continues to call on Australia to support Taiwan's push to join the trade agreement.¹⁰⁶ The Australian government has remained broadly noncommittal on both matters.¹⁰⁷

5.2 The economic relationship overall

'Australia is too economically reliant on China'

Nearly three-quarters of Australians (74 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views from 2023 (72 percent) and 2022 (74 percent), down from a high of 80 percent in 2021. Nineteen percent expressed neutrality and eight percent disagreed (Figure 37).

Figure 37. **Economic overreliance on China**

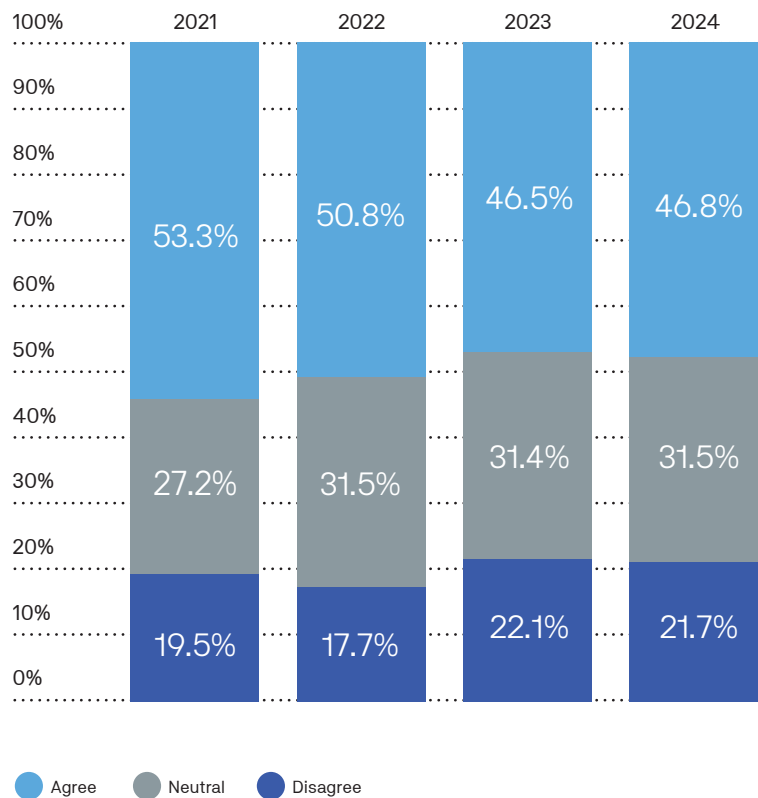


'Australia's economic relationship with China is more of an economic risk than an economic opportunity'

Nearly half of Australians (47 percent) agreed, a continuation of views from 2023 (47 percent) but still down from a high of 53 percent in 2021. Thirty-two percent expressed neutrality and 22 percent disagreed (Figure 38).

Figure 38. The Australia-China economic relationship: Economic risk or economic opportunity?

Australia's economic relationship with China is more of an economic risk than an economic opportunity

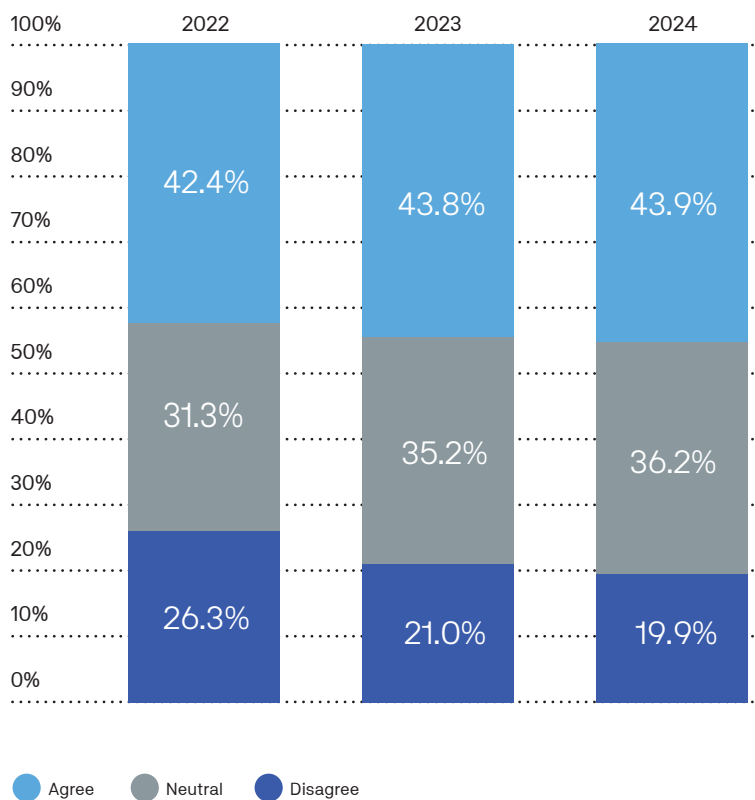


‘The Australian government has been successful in efforts to diversify trade, reducing Australia’s economic exposure to China’

Forty-four percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views from 2023 (44 percent), up from 42 percent in 2022. Thirty-six percent expressed neutrality and 20 percent disagreed (Figure 39).

Figure 39. Trade diversification

The Australian government has been successful in efforts to diversify trade, reducing Australia’s economic exposure to China

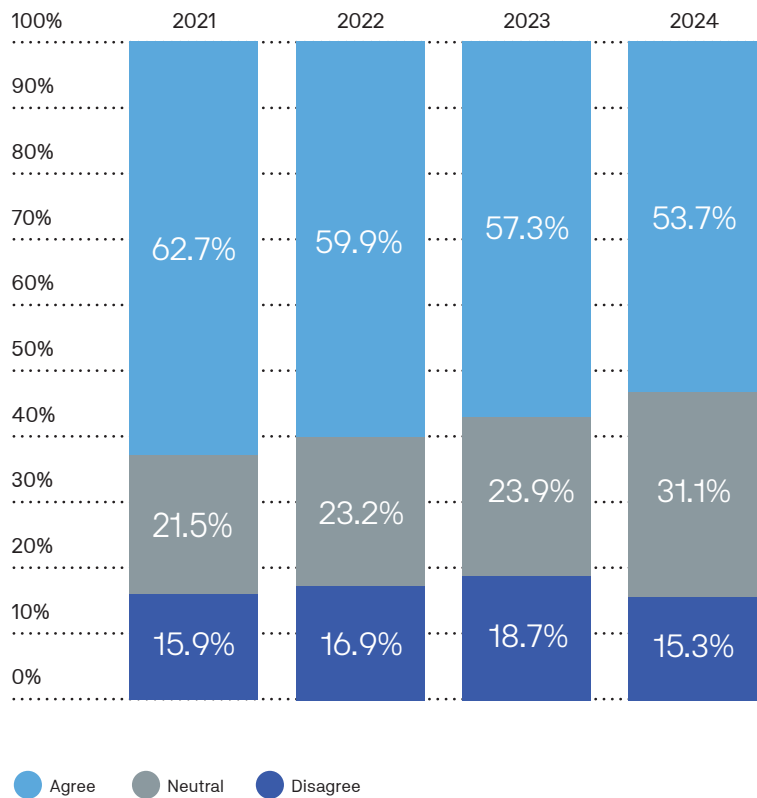


‘Without close economic engagement with China, Australia would not be as prosperous as it currently is’

Fifty-four percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a steady decrease in agreement with this view over the last four years, down from a high of 63 percent in 2021. Thirty-one percent expressed neutrality and 15 percent disagreed (Figure 40).

Figure 40. **Economic engagement with China and prosperity**

Without close economic engagement with China, Australia would not be as prosperous as it currently is



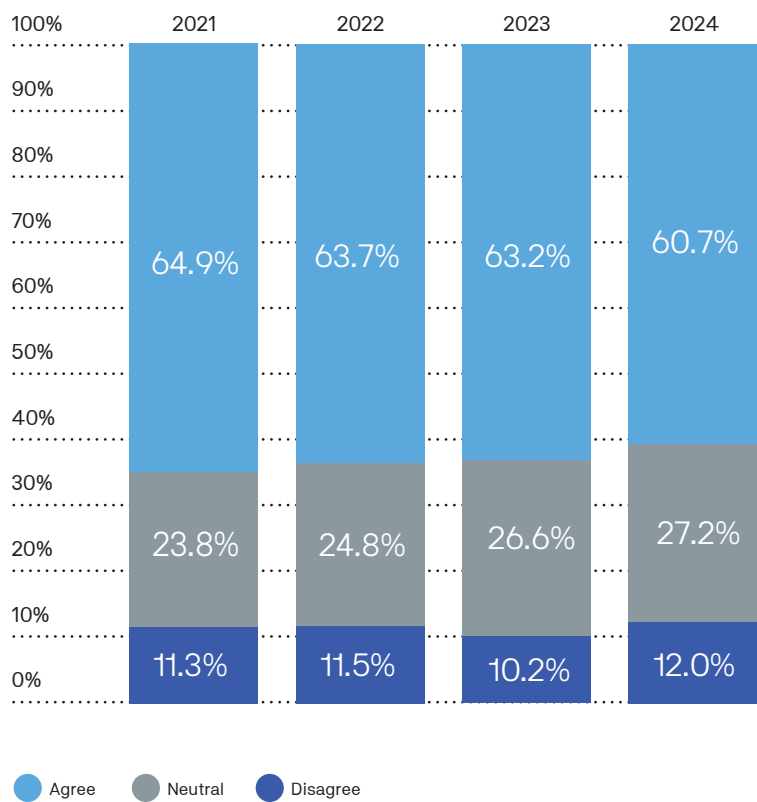
‘Trade with China has created job opportunities in Australia’

Sixty-one percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a steady incremental decrease in agreement with this view over the last four years, down from a high of 65 percent in 2021. Twenty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 12 percent disagreed (Figure 41).

A state/territory divide: Northern Territory residents (74 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 41. Trade with China and employment

Trade with China has created job opportunities in Australia

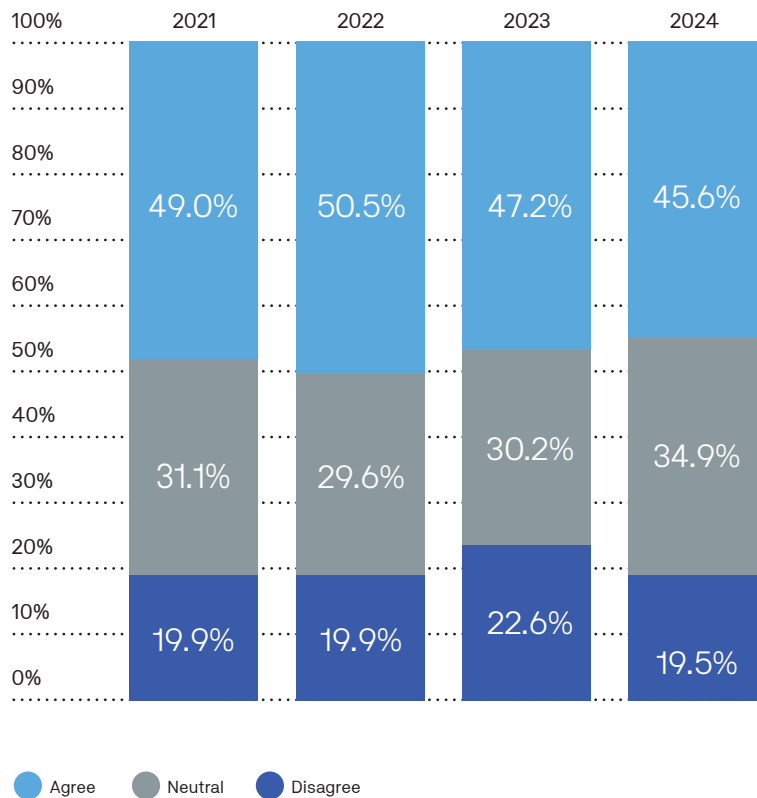


‘The Australian government needs to be supportive of having closer economic ties with China’

Forty-six percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a steady incremental decrease from a high of 51 percent in 2022. Thirty-five percent expressed neutrality and 20 percent disagreed (Figure 42).

Figure 42. **Australian government support for closer economic ties with China**

The Australian government needs to be supportive of having closer economic ties with China



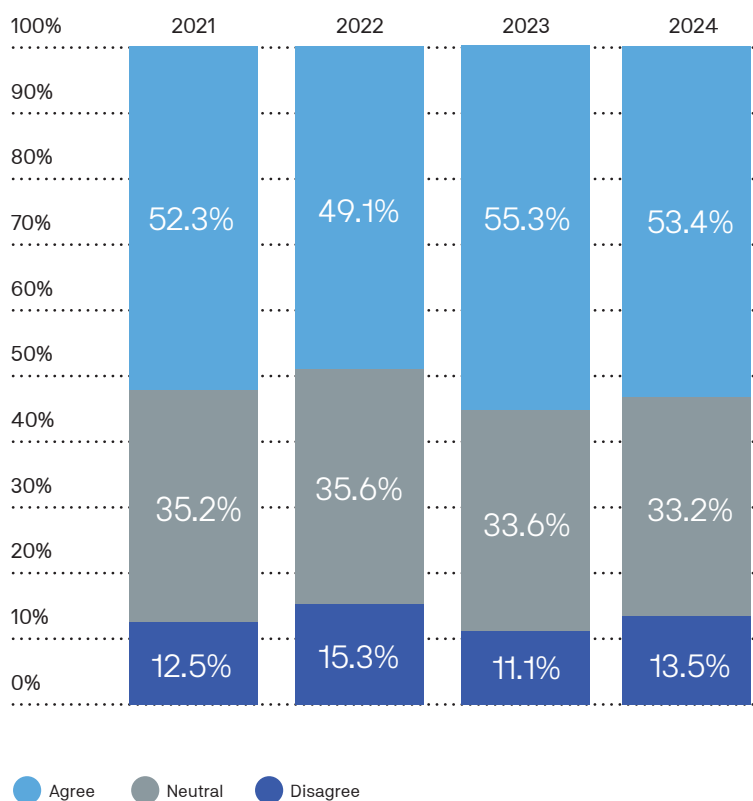
5.3 Trade agreements

‘The China–Australia Free Trade Agreement has been beneficial for Australia’

Fifty-three percent of Australians agreed, a two-point decrease from the four-year high of 55 percent in 2023, but still up from a low of 49 percent in 2022. Thirty-three percent expressed neutrality and 14 percent disagreed (Figure 43).

Figure 43. **The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA)**

The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement has been beneficial for Australia



‘The Australian government should support China’s bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement which 11 countries, including Australia, signed in 2018’

One-third of Australians (33 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views from 2023 (35 percent) and 2022 (31 percent). Forty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 21 percent disagreed (Figure 44).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (27 percent) were less likely to agree.

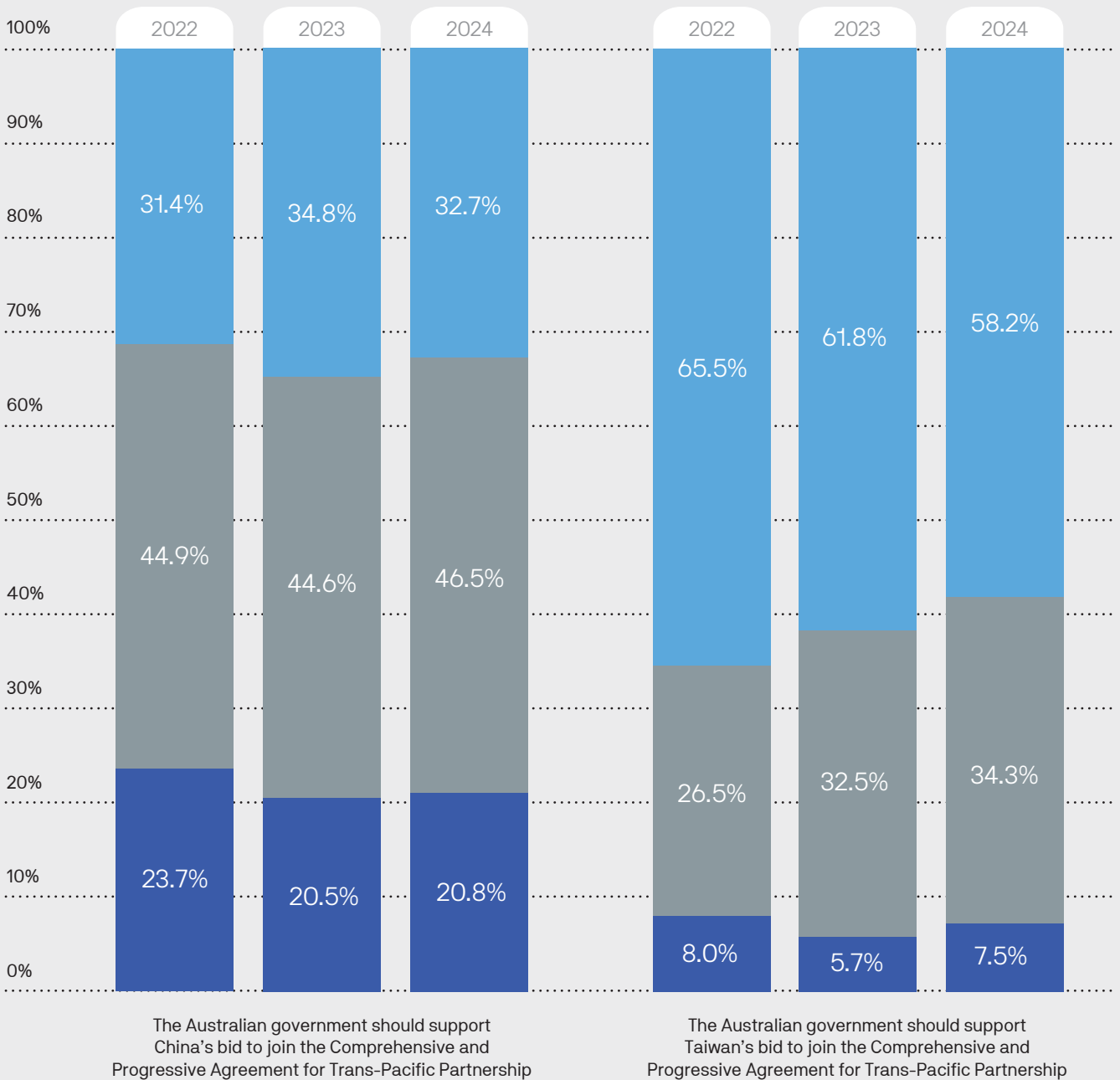
‘The Australian government should support Taiwan’s bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement which 11 countries, including Australia, signed in 2018’

Fifty-eight percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a steady decrease in agreement with this view over the last three years, down from a high of 66 percent in 2022. Thirty-four percent expressed neutrality and eight percent disagreed (Figure 44).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (69 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (45 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: South Australia residents (39 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 44. **Expansion of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)**



● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree

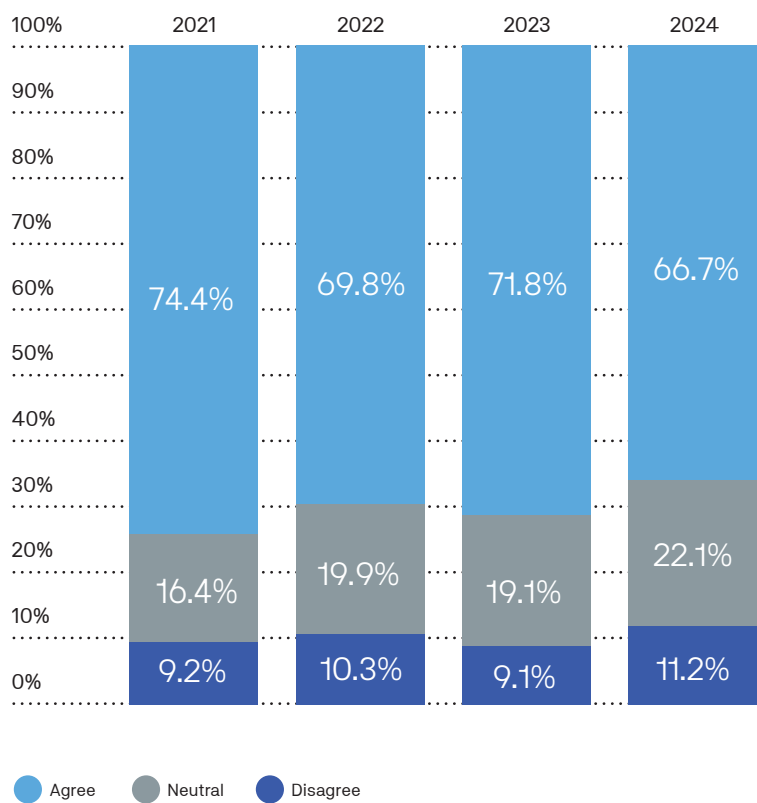
5.4 Trade case study: Tourism

‘Tourists from China provide a major economic benefit to Australia’

Sixty-seven percent of Australians agreed, a four-year low and down seven points from a high of 74 percent in 2021. Twenty-two percent expressed neutrality and 11 percent disagreed (Figure 45).

Figure 45. Trade case study: Tourism – Economic benefits

Tourists from China provide a major economic benefit to Australia



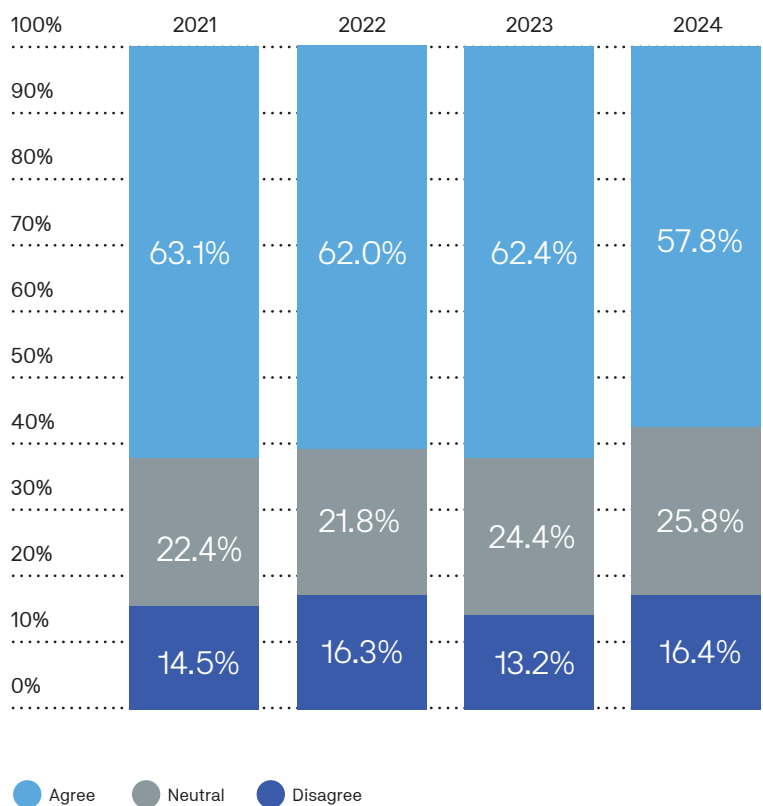
‘Australia should continue to work towards making Australia an attractive destination for Chinese tourists’

Fifty-eight percent of Australians agreed, a four-year low and down five points from a high of 63 percent in 2021 (Figure 46).

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (67 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 46. Trade case study: Tourism – Attracting tourists from China

Australia should continue to work towards making Australia an attractive destination for Chinese tourists



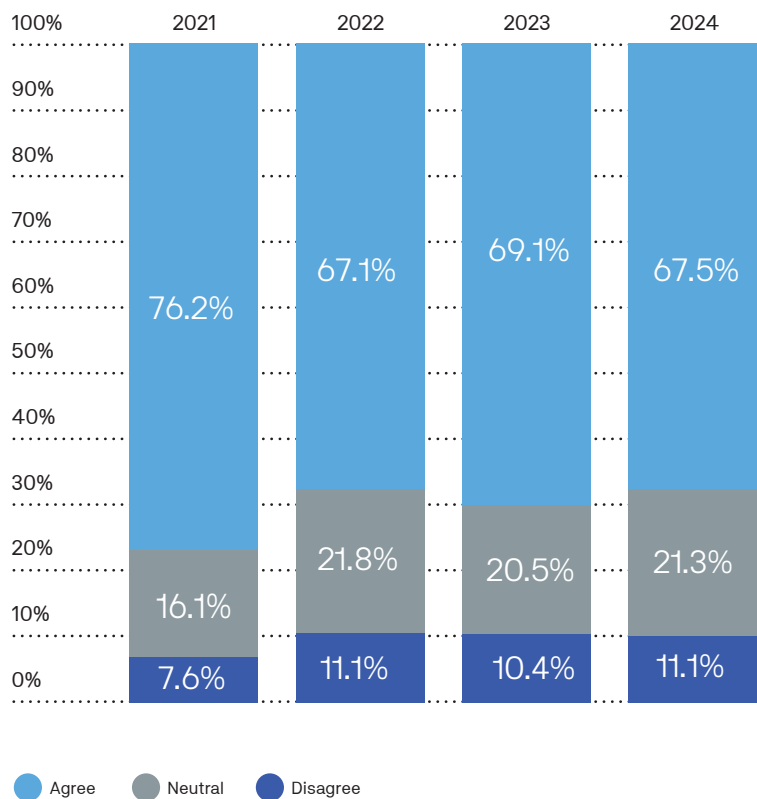
5.5 Trade case study: Education

‘International students from China provide a major economic benefit to Australia’

Sixty-eight percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views over the last three years, down from a high of 76 percent in 2021. Twenty-one percent expressed neutrality and 11 percent disagreed (Figure 47).

Figure 47. Trade case study: Education – Economic benefit

International students from China provide a major economic benefit to Australia



‘Australian universities are too financially reliant on international students from China’

Seventy-three percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a mild fluctuation in views over the last three years but still down from a high of 81 percent in 2021. Twenty percent expressed neutrality and seven percent disagreed (Figure 48).

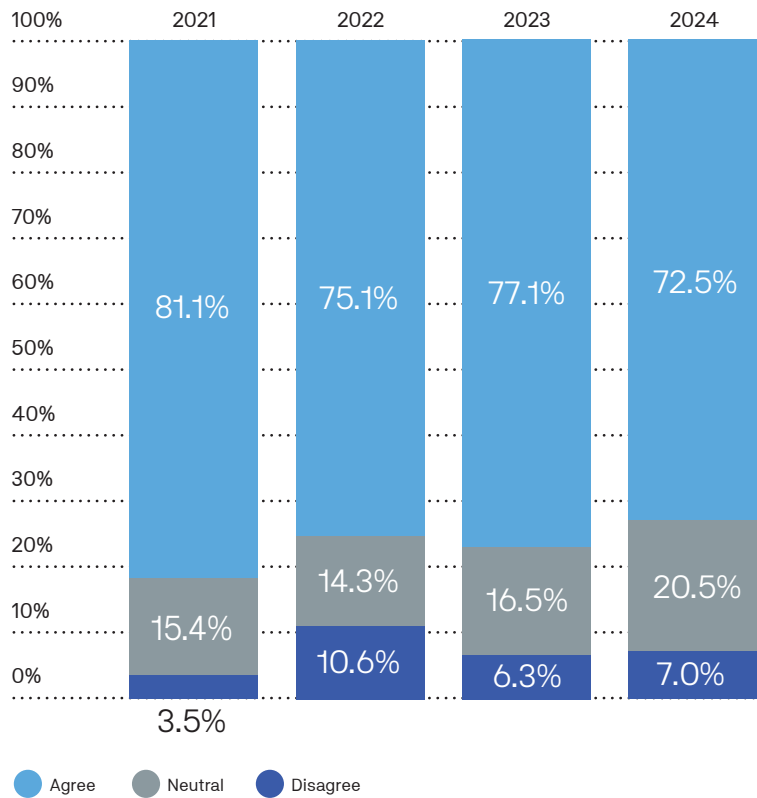
An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (84 percent) were more likely to agree.

An education divide: Australians who completed a postgraduate degree (78 percent) were more likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (82 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 48. Trade case study: Education – Financial overreliance by Australian universities

Australian universities are too financially reliant on international students from China



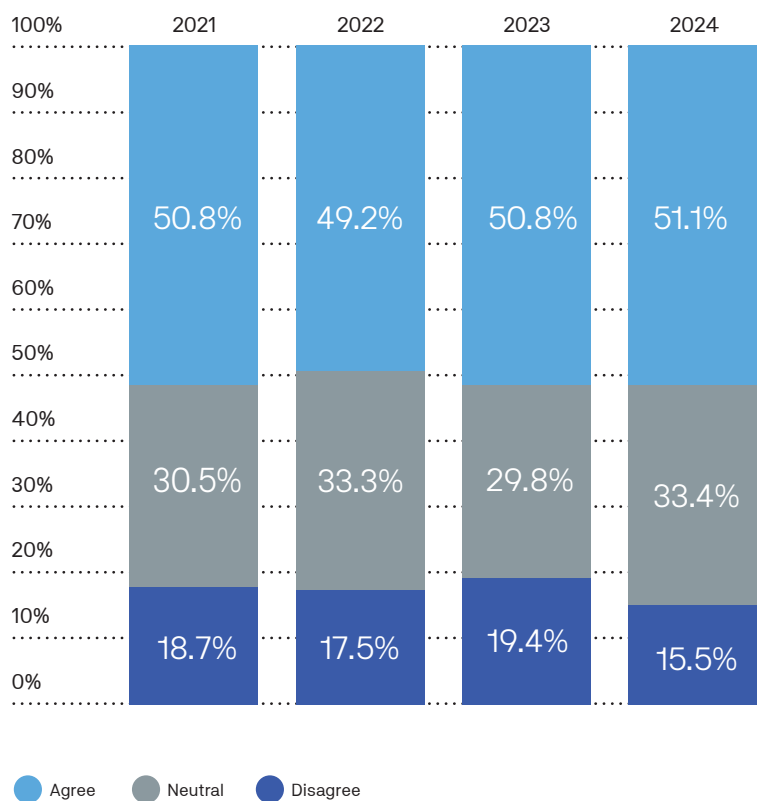
5.6 Foreign investment

‘Foreign investment from China is more detrimental than beneficial to Australia’

Fifty-one percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views over the last four years. One-third (33 percent) expressed neutrality and 16 percent disagreed (Figure 49).

Figure 49. Foreign investment from China: Detrimental or beneficial?

Foreign investment from China is more detrimental than beneficial to Australia

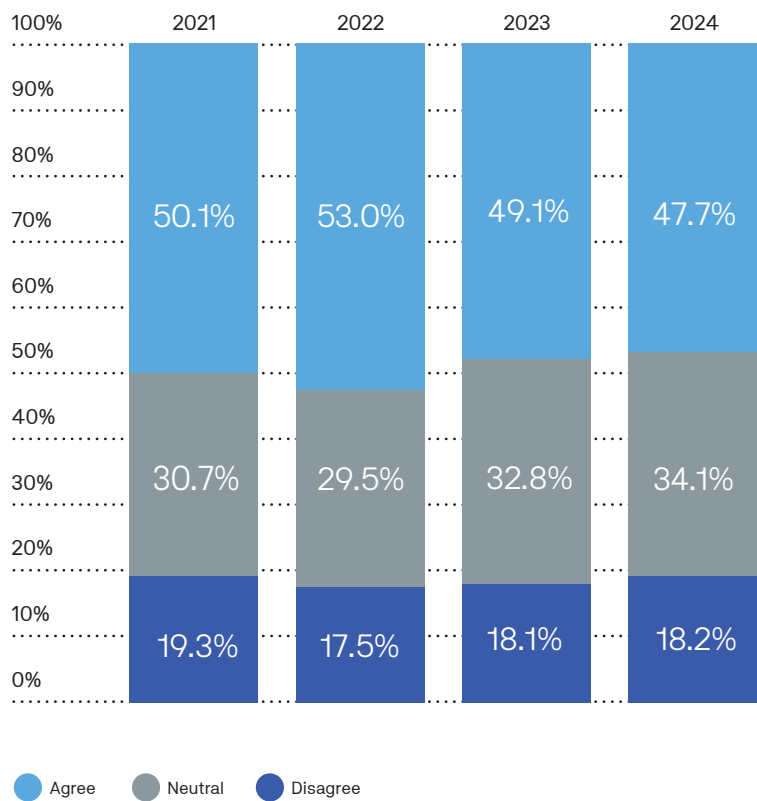


‘Foreign investment from China has created job opportunities in Australia’

Forty-eight percent of Australians agreed, a general continuation of views from 2023 (49 percent), down from a high of 53 percent in 2022. Thirty-four percent expressed neutrality and 18 percent disagreed (Figure 50).

Figure 50. Foreign investment from China and employment

Foreign investment from China has created job opportunities in Australia



5.7 Investment case study: Port of Darwin

‘The Australian government was right not to cancel or vary Chinese-owned company Landbridge’s 99-year lease of the Port of Darwin’

Just over one-quarter of Australians (26 percent) agreed. Thirty-two percent expressed neutrality and 42 percent disagreed (Figure 51).

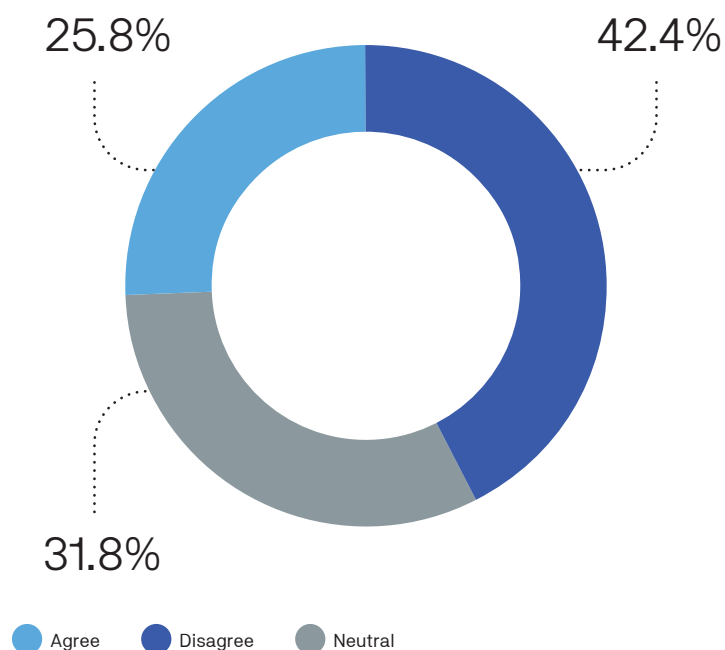
An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18–34 (34 percent) were more likely to agree. Older Australians aged 55+ (21 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (14 percent) were less likely to agree.

An education divide: Australians who completed a certificate, trade or diploma (21 percent) as their highest level of education were less likely to agree.

Figure 51. Investment case study: Port of Darwin – Support for the Australian government’s decision not to cancel or vary the Landbridge lease

The Australian government was right not to cancel or vary Chinese-owned company Landbridge’s 99-year lease of the Port of Darwin



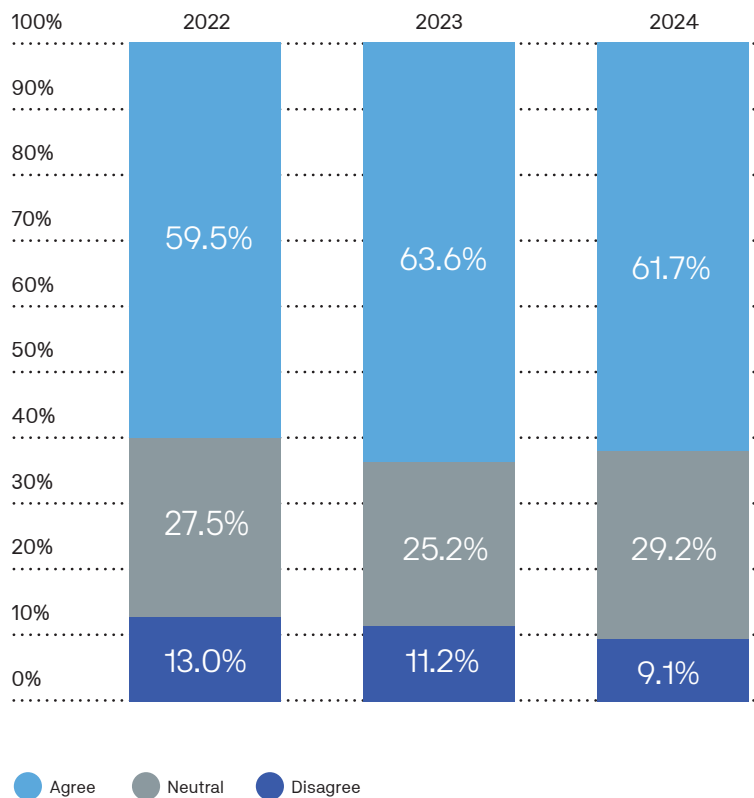
‘The Australian government should force Landbridge, the Chinese company that bought the 99-year lease to the Port of Darwin in 2015, to sell the port back to the government’

Sixty-two percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed in 2023 (64 percent) and 2022 (60 percent). Twenty-nine percent expressed neutrality and nine percent disagreed (Figure 52).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (73 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (55 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 52. Investment case study: Port of Darwin – Support for the Australian government to force Landbridge to sell back the lease

The Australian government should force Landbridge, the Chinese company that bought the 99-year lease to the Port of Darwin in 2015, to sell the port back to the government



5.8 Investment case study: Critical minerals

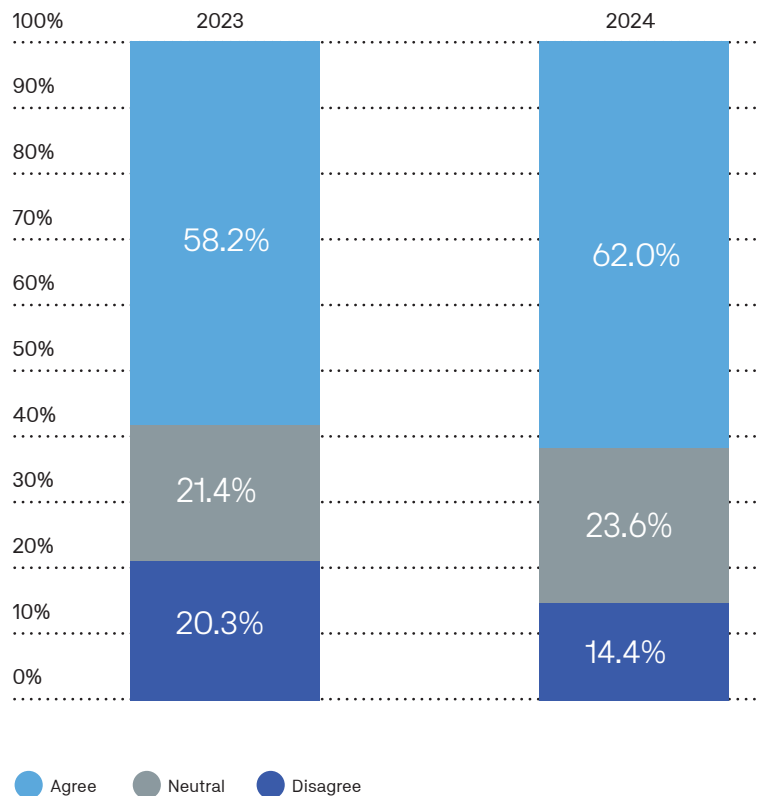
‘The Australian government should limit foreign investment from other countries (e.g., US, UK, Canada, Japan, South Korea, India, China) in Australia’s critical minerals industry’

Just over six in 10 Australians (62 percent) agreed, a four-point increase from 2023. Twenty-four percent expressed neutrality and 14 percent disagreed (Figure 53).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (69 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 53. Investment case study:
Critical minerals – General limitation on
foreign investment

The Australian government should limit foreign investment from other countries (e.g., US, UK, Canada, Japan, South Korea, India, China) in Australia’s critical minerals industry



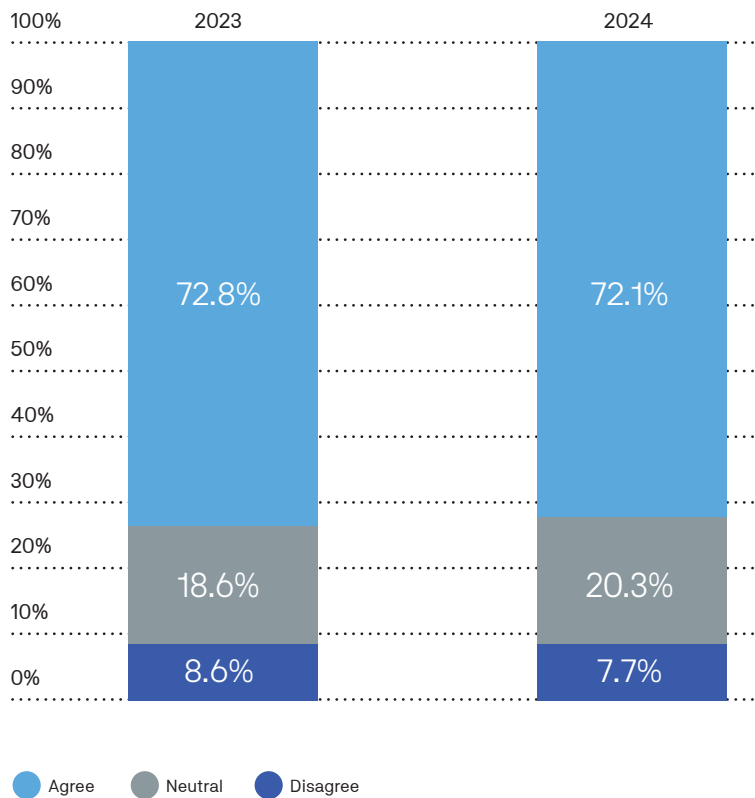
‘The Australian government should limit foreign investment from China in Australia’s critical minerals industry’

Just over seven in 10 Australians (72 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views from 2023 (73 percent). Twenty percent expressed neutrality and eight percent disagreed (Figure 54).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (83 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (60 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 54. **Investment case study: Critical minerals – Limitation on foreign investment from China**

The Australian government should limit foreign investment from China in Australia’s critical minerals industry



5.9 Investment case study: Agriculture

‘Chinese investment in agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia is more beneficial than detrimental to Australia’s interests’

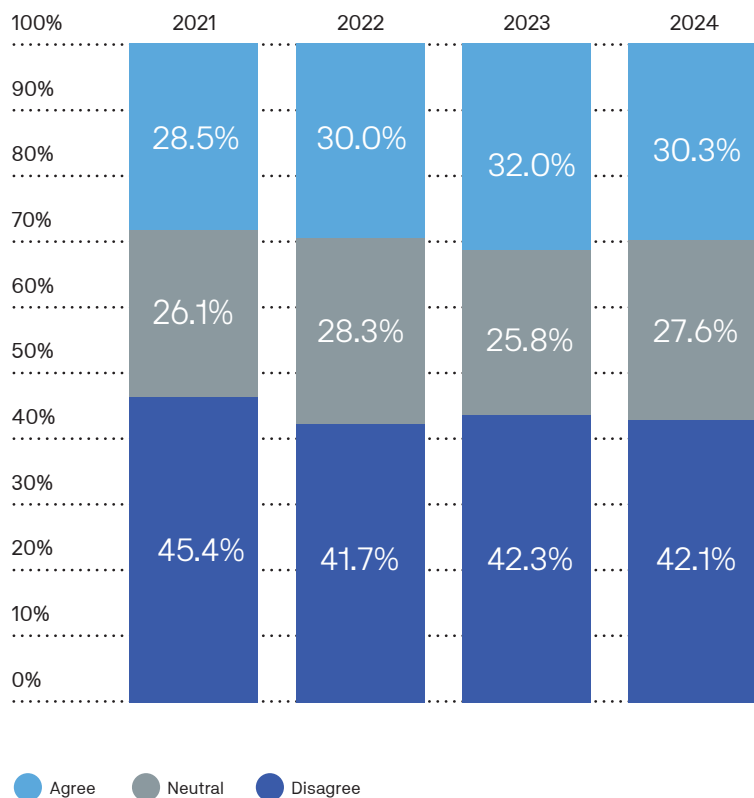
Three in 10 Australians (30 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years. Twenty-eight percent expressed neutrality and 42 percent disagreed (Figure 55).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18–34 (39 percent) and Australians aged 35–55 (37 percent) were more likely to agree. Older Australians aged 55+ (20 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Northern Territory residents (15 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 55. Investment case study: Agriculture – Beneficial or detrimental?

Chinese investment in agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia is more beneficial than detrimental to Australia’s interests



‘Chinese ownership of agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia is more concerning than ownership by companies from other countries’

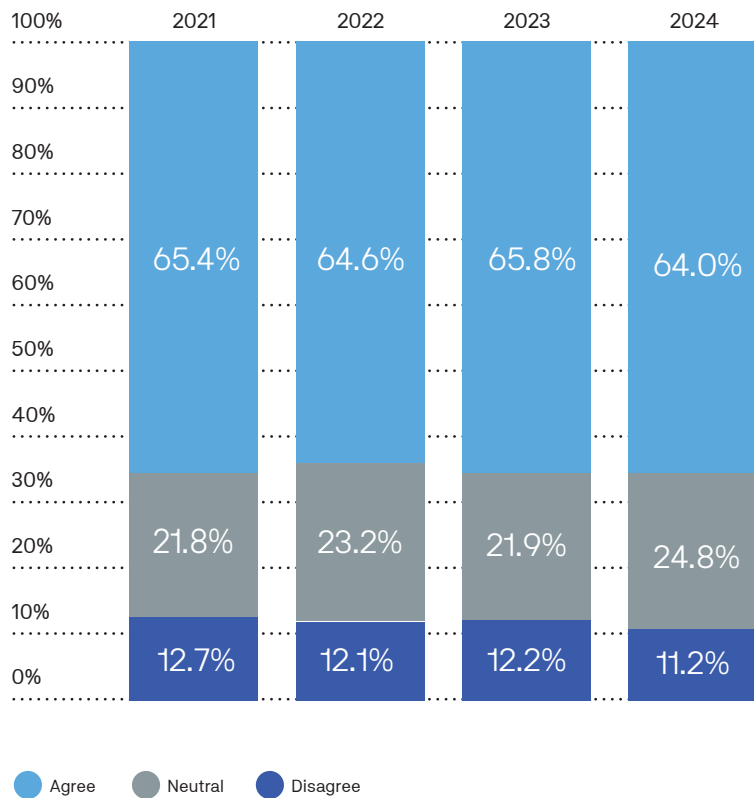
Just under two-thirds of Australians (64 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views expressed over the last four years. Twenty-five percent expressed neutrality and 11 percent disagreed (Figure 56).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18–34 (52 percent) were less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (75 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 56. Investment case study: Agriculture – Chinese ownership versus ownership by companies from other countries

Chinese ownership of agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia is more concerning than ownership by companies from other countries



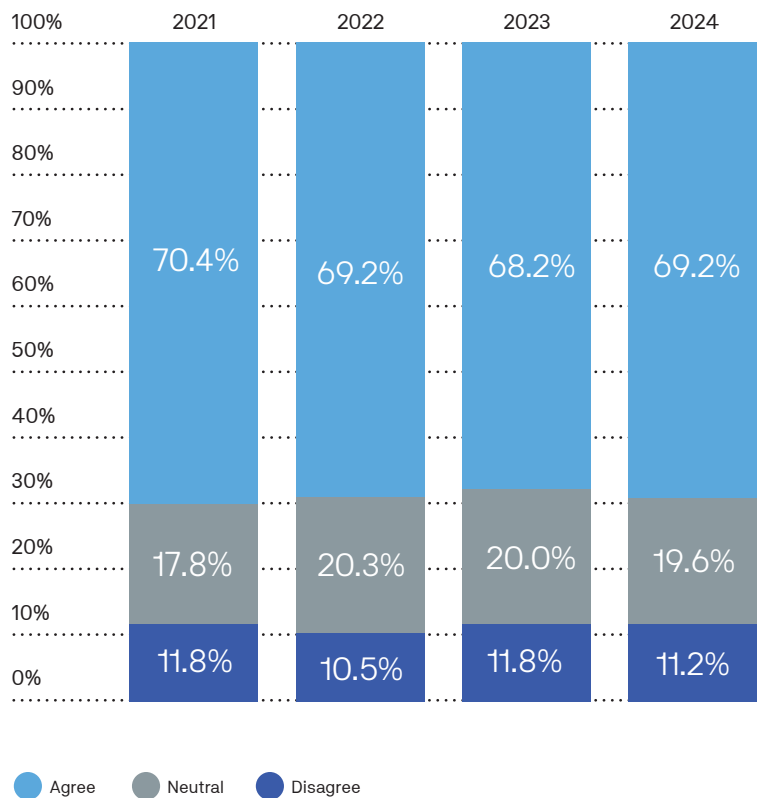
‘Chinese ownership of agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia presents a threat to Australia’s food security’

Nearly seven in 10 Australians (69 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views over the last four years. Twenty percent expressed neutrality and 11 percent disagreed (Figure 57).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18–34 (62 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 57. **Investment case study: Agriculture - Food security concerns**

Chinese ownership of agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia presents a threat to Australia’s food security



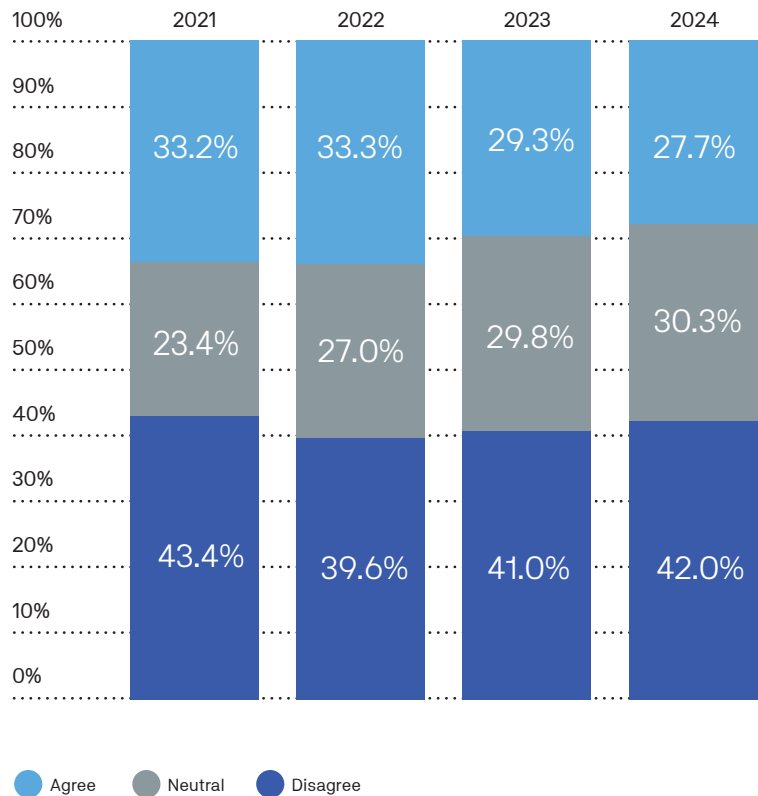
5.10 Investment case study: Residential real estate

'Chinese investment in Australian residential real estate brings a lot of benefits for Australians (e.g., construction, new dwellings, jobs)'

Twenty-eight percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a four-year low. Thirty percent expressed neutrality and 42 percent disagreed (Figure 58).

Figure 58. Investment case study:
Residential real estate – Benefits

Chinese investment in Australian residential real estate brings a lot of benefits for Australians (e.g., construction, new dwellings, jobs)

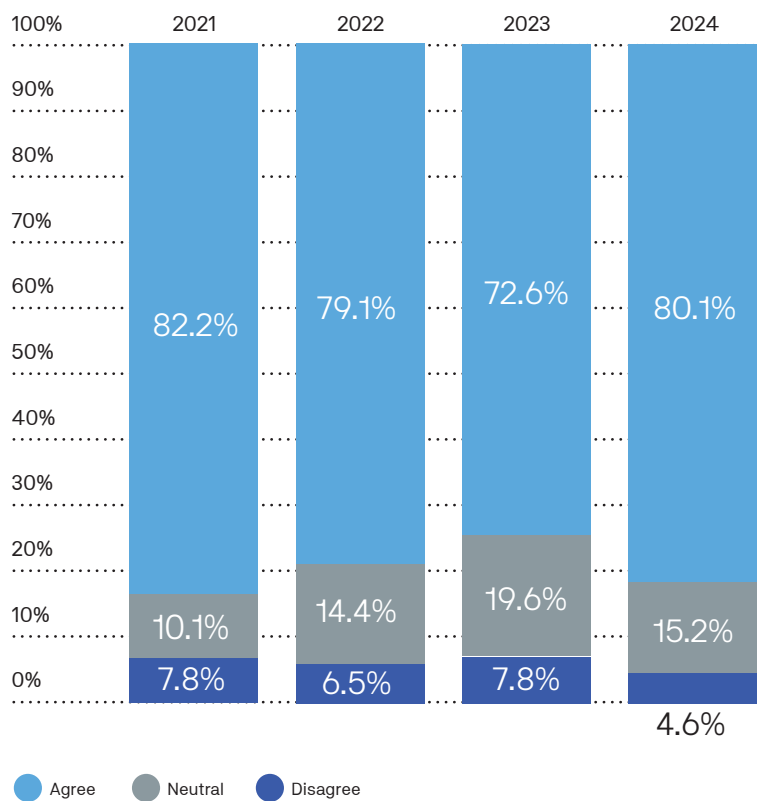


'Foreign buyers from China drive up Australian housing prices'

Eight in 10 Australians (80 percent) agreed, a seven-point increase from a low of 73 percent in 2023, a near-return to the high of 82 percent in 2021. Fifteen percent expressed neutrality and five percent disagreed (Figure 59).

Figure 59. **Investment case study:**
Residential real estate – Housing price pressure

Foreign buyers from China drive up Australian housing prices

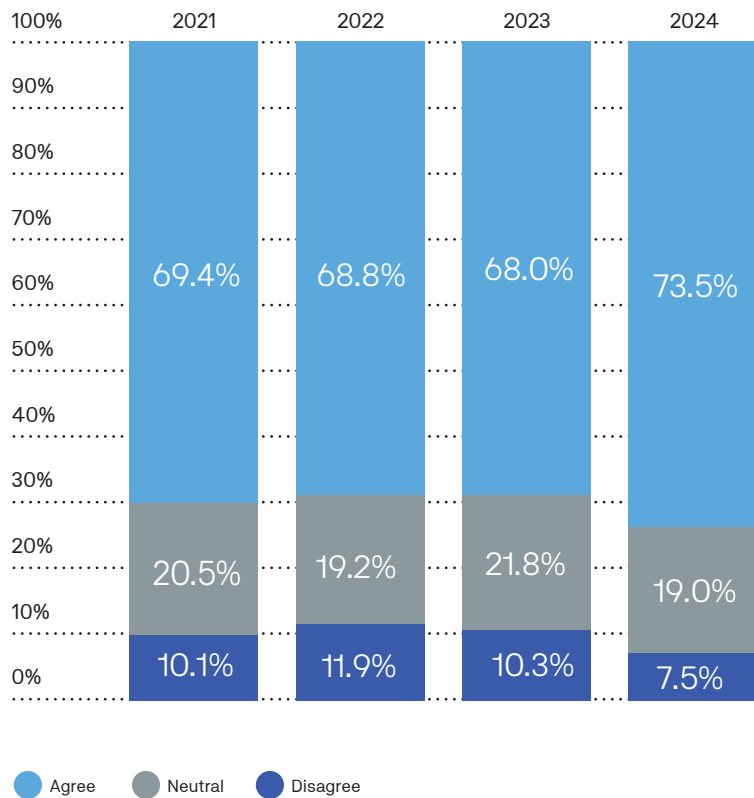


‘Chinese investors have negatively affected the rental market for residential real estate in Australia’

Nearly three-quarters of Australians (74 percent) agreed, reflecting a four-year high. Nineteen percent expressed neutrality and eight percent disagreed (Figure 60).

Figure 60. Investment case study:
Residential real estate – Rental market pressure

Chinese investors have negatively affected the rental market for residential real estate in Australia

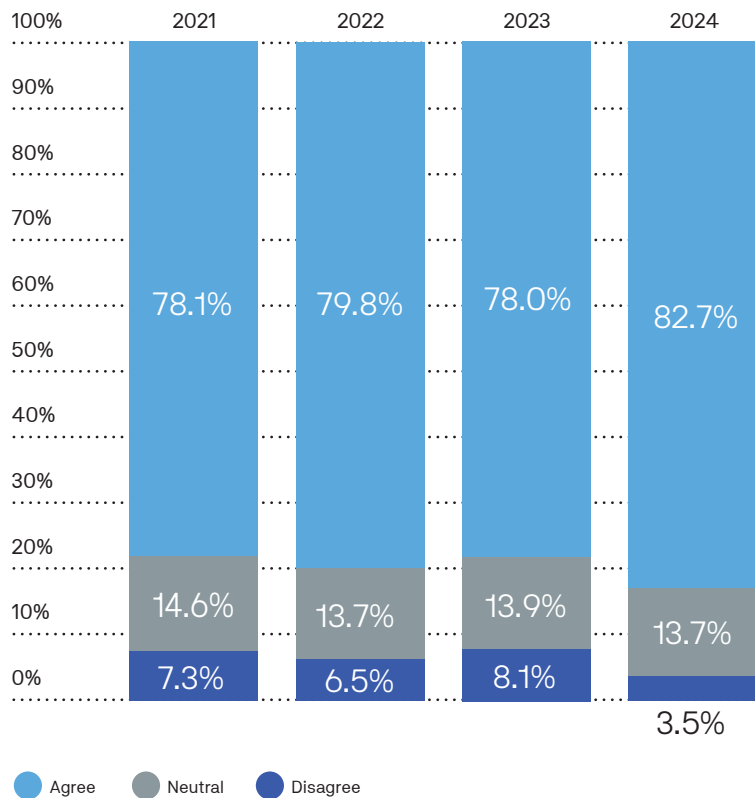


'Australia should restrict the amount of investment in residential real estate that is permitted from Chinese investors'

Over eight in 10 Australians (83 percent) agreed, reflecting a four-year high. Fourteen percent expressed neutrality and four percent disagreed (Figure 61).

Figure 61. **Investment case study: Residential real estate – Support for investment restriction**

Australia should restrict the amount of investment in residential real estate that is permitted from Chinese investors



5.11 Business ties

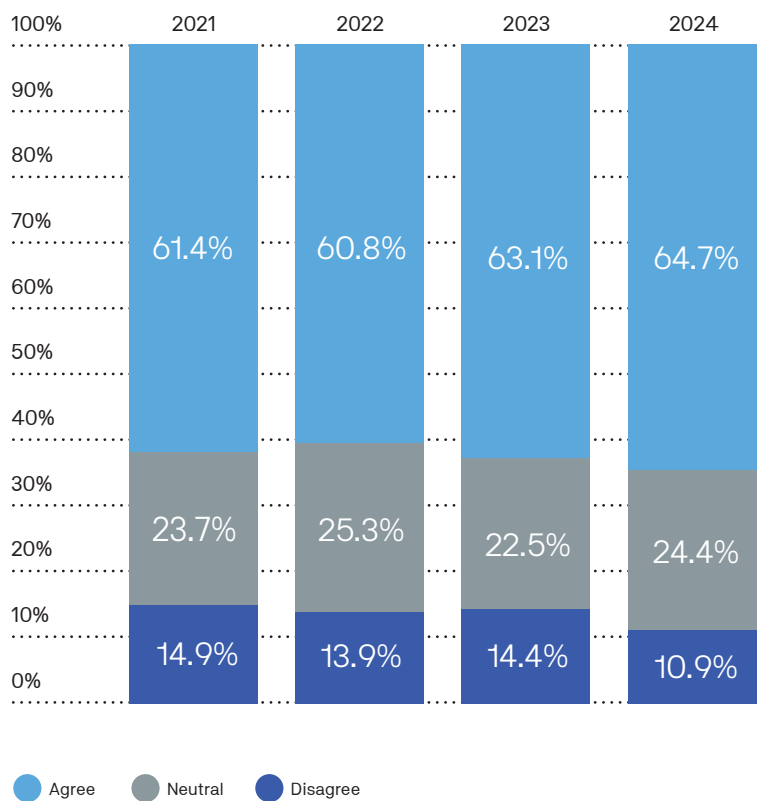
‘Australian companies should continue to pursue business opportunities with China’

Nearly two-thirds of Australians (65 percent) agreed, a general continuation of views over the last four years. Twenty-four percent expressed neutrality and 11 percent disagreed (Figure 62).

A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (87 percent) were more likely to agree. Tasmania residents (58 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 62. **Support for business ties**

Australian companies should continue to pursue business opportunities with China



‘Australia should not do business with China because of their record on human rights’

Forty-five percent agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views from 2023 (43 percent) but still down from a high of 49 percent in 2022. Twenty-nine percent expressed neutrality and 27 percent disagreed (Figure 63).

A state/territory divide: New South Wales residents (50 percent) were more likely to agree. Victoria residents (39 percent) were less likely to agree.

‘Australia should not do business with China because of their domestic censorship of media, internet and other forms of communication’

Four in 10 Australians agreed (40 percent), reflecting a general continuation of views over the last four years. Thirty-one percent expressed neutrality and 29 percent disagreed (Figure 63).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18–34 (47 percent) were more likely to agree. Older Australians aged 55+ (33 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Tasmania residents (51 percent) and New South Wales residents (48 percent) were more likely to agree. Australian Capital Territory residents (22 percent) were less likely to agree.

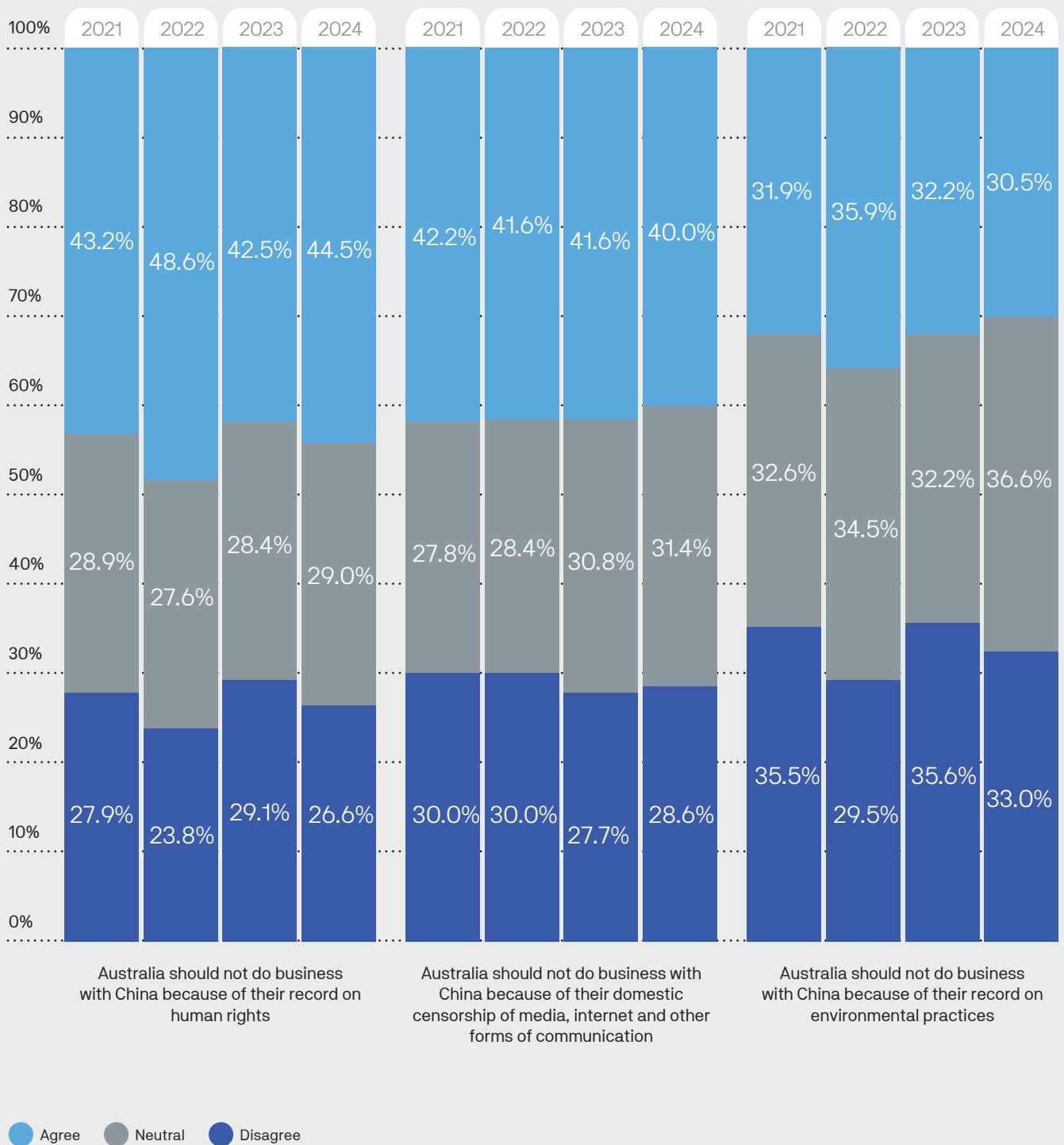
An education divide: Australians who completed a postgraduate degree (32 percent) as their highest level of education were less likely to agree.

‘Australia should not do business with China because of their record on environmental practices’

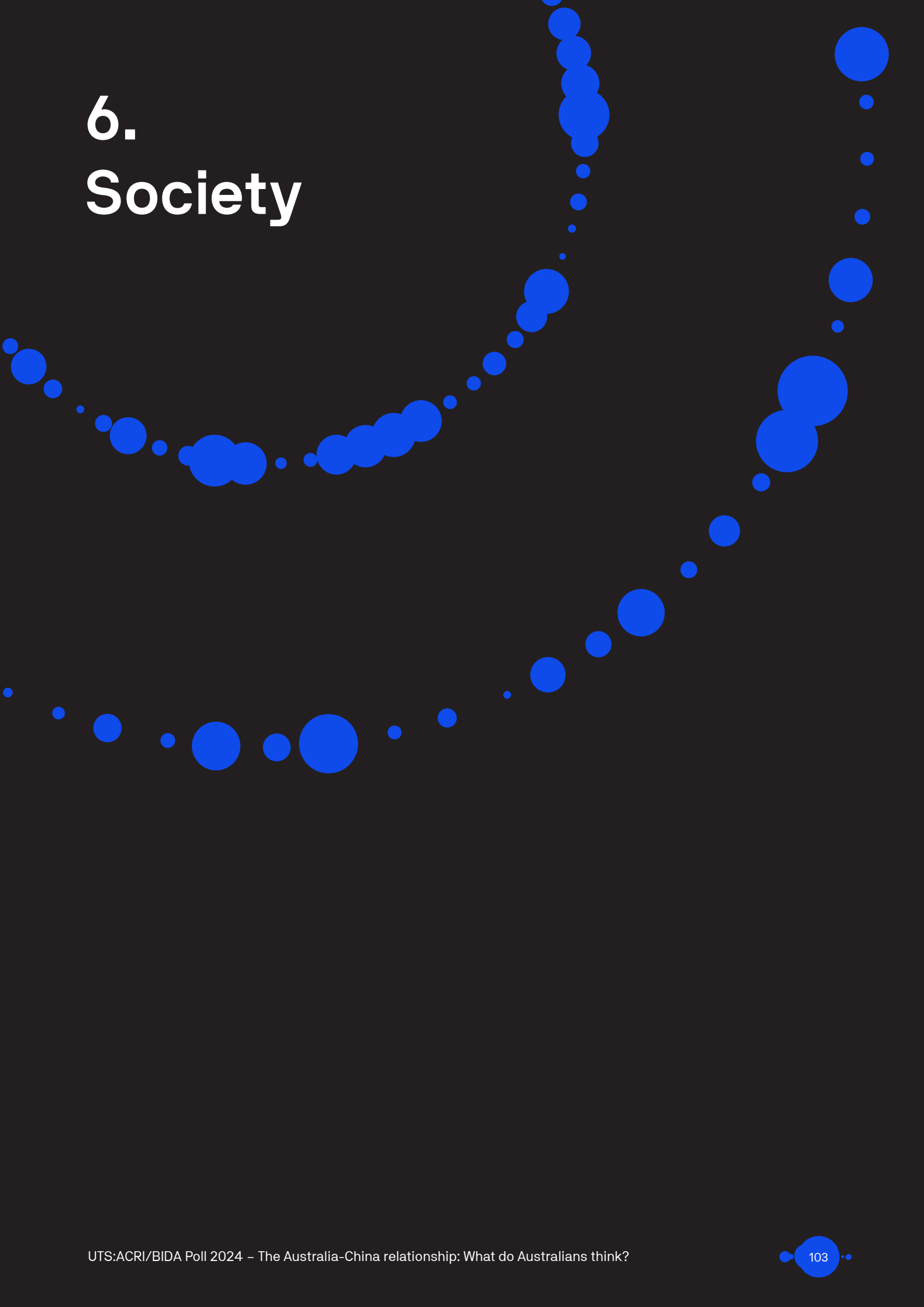
Three in 10 Australians (30 percent) agreed, a general continuation of views from 2023 (32 percent), down from a high of 36 percent in 2022. Thirty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 33 percent disagreed (Figure 63).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18–34 (36 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 63. **Concerns about business ties**



6. Society



6.1 Background

In October 2023, Australian citizen Cheng Lei was released after more than three years in detention, having been accused of illegally supplying state secrets overseas.¹⁰⁸ The actual action in question, it transpired, was breaking an embargo on a Chinese government briefing by a few minutes.¹⁰⁹ Her sentencing had been delayed more than six times since her one-day closed door trial in March 2022. Upon her return to Australia she told press, ‘What sounds innocuous to us here... are not in China’, adding that ‘the gambit of state security is widening’.¹¹⁰

Four months later, the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People’s Court handed down a suspended death sentence with the possibility of commutation to life imprisonment subject to good behaviour to Yang Hengjun, an Australian citizen detained in China since January 2019 on charges of espionage.¹¹¹ Government ministers have undertaken to continue public and private advocacy for Dr Yang.¹¹² There are concerns around Dr Yang’s ill health and the inadequate provision of medical care by Chinese authorities.¹¹³ In March 2024, China’s Ambassador to Australia Xiao Qian said that ‘theoretically there is a chance he will not be executed’, the first time a Chinese official had noted that Dr Yang might not be executed, according to *Reuters*.¹¹⁴

Other Australians have also been accused of breaching national security laws. In July 2023, Hong Kong police issued arrest warrants for eight overseas democracy activists, including an Australian citizen and an Australian resident, accusing them of breaching national security laws. A \$192,000 bounty was issued for their return.¹¹⁵

Human rights groups and the opposition have continued to press the Australian government to place Magnitsky-style sanctions on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights abuses.¹¹⁶ While the government has used the legislation against Myanmar, Iran and Russia,¹¹⁷ it has not yet used it against China despite having indicated a willingness to do so from opposition.¹¹⁸

Tensions in the Australia-China relationship have become less acute since the trough between 2016 and early 2022, but some within the Chinese-Australian community, particularly first-generation migrants from China, continue to experience challenges stemming from persistent difficulties in the bilateral relationship.¹¹⁹



6.2 The Australian-Chinese community

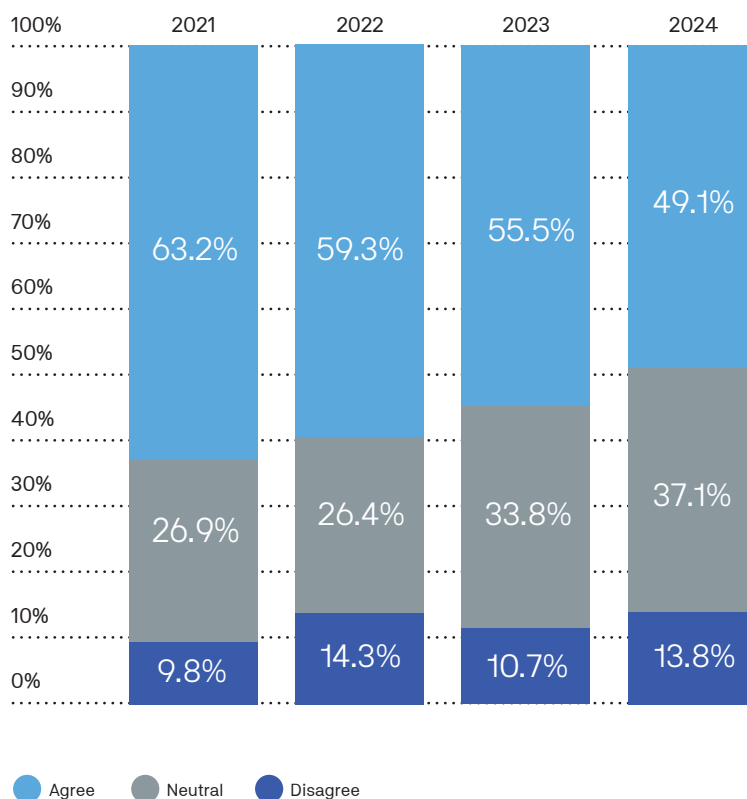
‘Political tensions in the Australia–China relationship are negatively impacting Australians of Chinese origin’

Forty-nine percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a steady decrease in agreement with this view over the last four years, down from a high of 63 percent in 2021. Thirty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 14 percent disagreed (Figure 64).

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (64 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 64. Impact of political tensions on the Australian-Chinese community

Political tensions in the Australia-China relationship are negatively impacting Australians of Chinese origin



‘Australians of Chinese origin can be mobilised by the Chinese government to undermine Australia’s interests and social cohesion’

Forty-three percent of Australians agreed, a continuation of views from 2023 (43 percent), with agreement with the view having incrementally increased since 2022 (42 percent) and 2021 (39 percent). Thirty-six percent expressed neutrality and 21 percent disagreed (Figure 65).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18–34 (37 percent) were less likely to agree.

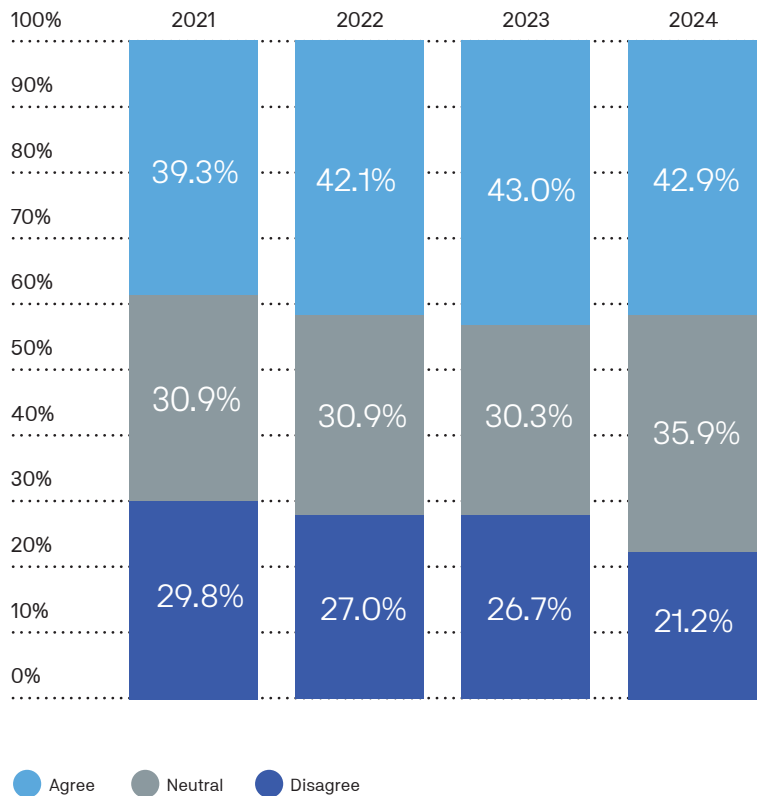
A state/territory divide: South Australia residents (26 percent) were less likely to agree.

An urban/rural divide: Australians who reside in rural areas (49 percent) were more likely to agree compared with those who reside in small or large metropolitan areas.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (37 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 65. Perceptions of Chinese government influence on the Australian-Chinese community

Australians of Chinese origin can be mobilised by the Chinese government to undermine Australia’s interests and social cohesion



6.3 Foreign influence

'Australian values and traditions are being undermined by Chinese government influence in Australia'

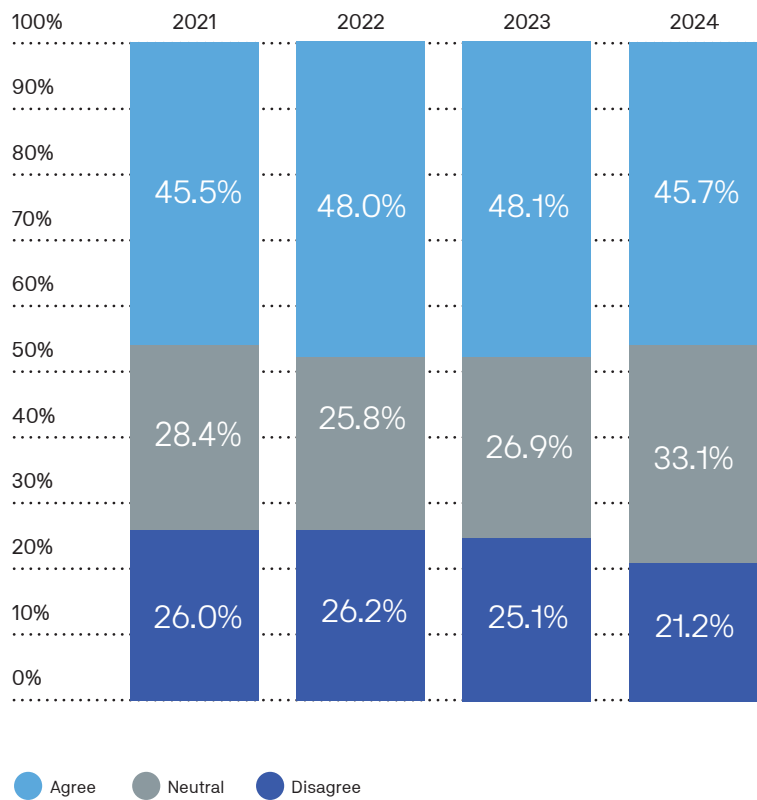
Forty-six percent of Australians agreed, a two-point decrease from 2023 (48 percent) and 2022 (48 percent), and a return to levels of concern expressed in 2021 (46 percent). One-third (33 percent) expressed neutrality and 21 percent disagreed (Figure 66).

A state/territory divide: South Australia residents (34 percent) were less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (62 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 66. Perceptions of the impact of Chinese government influence on Australian values and traditions

Australian values and traditions are being undermined by Chinese government influence in Australia



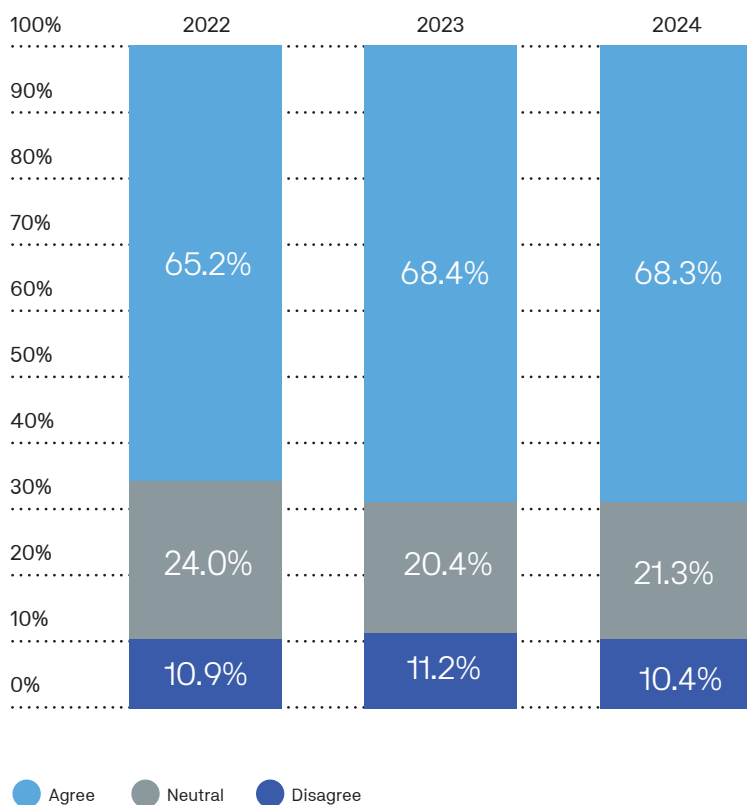
6.4 Sanctions legislation

*'Australia should place sanctions, such as travel and financial bans, on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights violations such as those committed in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong'**

Sixty-eight percent of Australians agreed, a continuation of views from 2023 (68 percent), up from a low of 65 percent in 2022. Twenty-one percent expressed neutrality and 10 percent disagreed (Figure 67).

Figure 67. **Support for the use of sanctions legislation**

Australia should place sanctions, such as travel and financial bans, on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights violations such as those committed in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong*



*Note: The wording of this statement in 2022 and 2023 was 'Australia should place sanctions, such as travel and financial bans, on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights violations'. This was changed in 2024 to 'Australia should place sanctions, such as travel and financial bans, on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights violations such as those committed in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong'.

6.5 Arbitrary detention

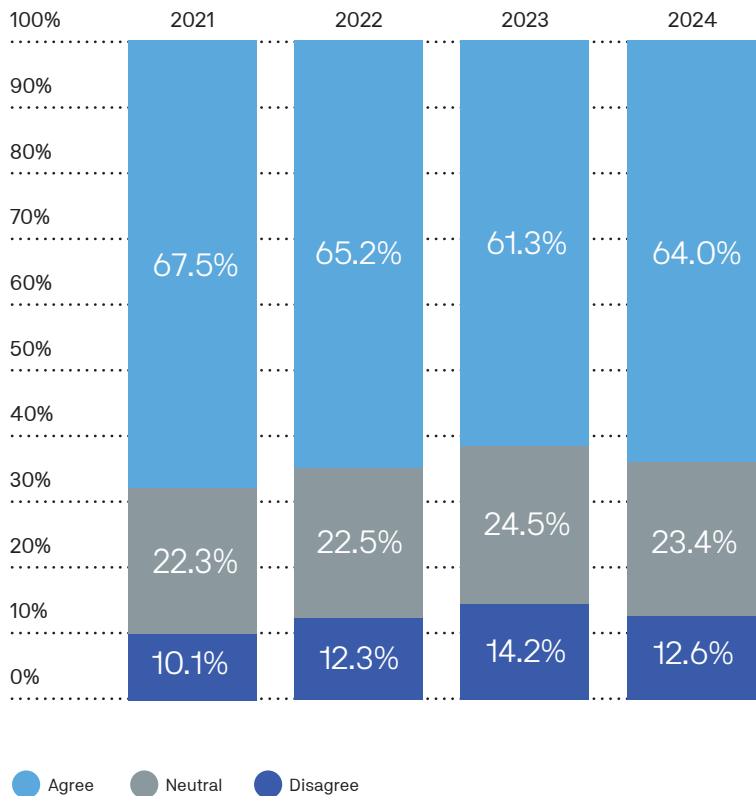
‘China is willing to detain/arrest Australian citizens without any legal basis to punish Australia over political disagreements’

Sixty-four percent of Australians agreed, a three-point increase from 2023 but still down from a high of 68 percent in 2021. Twenty-three percent expressed neutrality and 13 percent disagreed (Figure 68).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (77 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (51 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 68. **China’s willingness to arbitrarily detain Australian citizens**

China is willing to detain/arrest Australian citizens without any legal basis to punish Australia over political disagreements



‘The risk of arbitrary detention is a concern when considering travel to China’

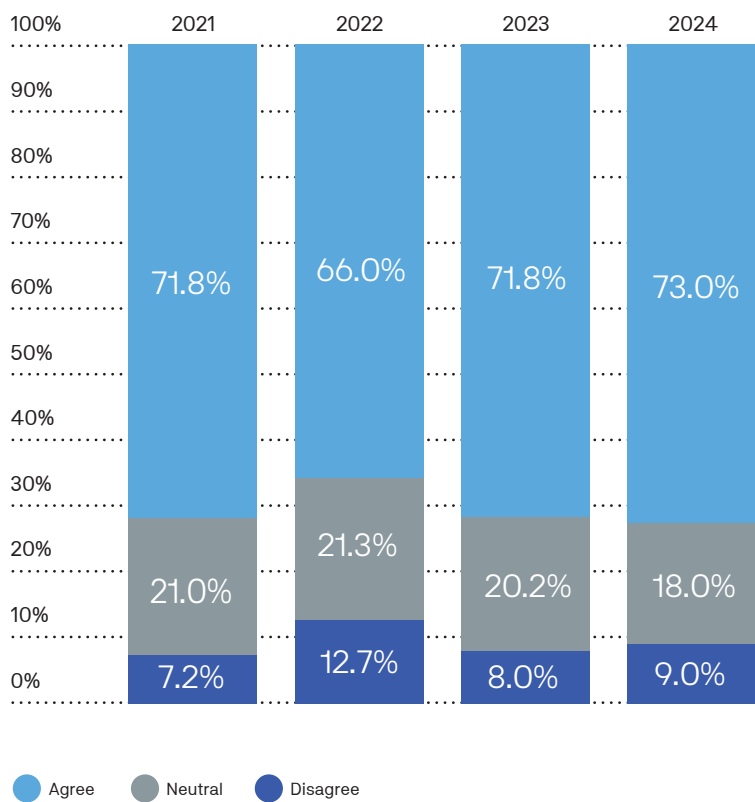
Seventy-three percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a four-year high. Eighteen percent expressed neutrality and nine percent disagreed (Figure 69).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18–34 (58 percent) were less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Liberal/Nationals at the 2022 federal election (83 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 69. **Arbitrary detention – A concern when considering travel to China?**

The risk of arbitrary detention is a concern when considering travel to China



6.6 International students

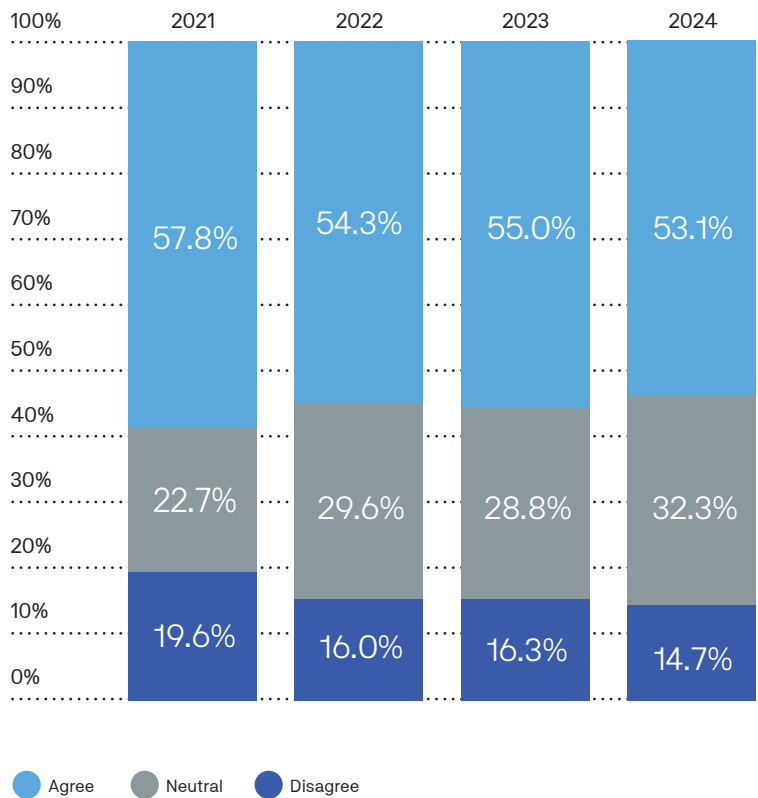
‘International students from China help strengthen the people-to-people links (e.g., family, friendships, business contacts, tourism) between the two countries’

Fifty-three percent agreed, reflecting a four-year low and down from a high of 58 percent in 2021. Nearly one-third expressed neutrality (32 percent) and 15 percent disagreed (Figure 70).

A political divide: Australians who voted for the Australian Labor Party at the 2022 federal election (61 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 70. Perceptions of international students’ impact on people-to-people links

International students from China help strengthen the people-to-people links (e.g., family, friendships, business contacts, tourism) between the two countries



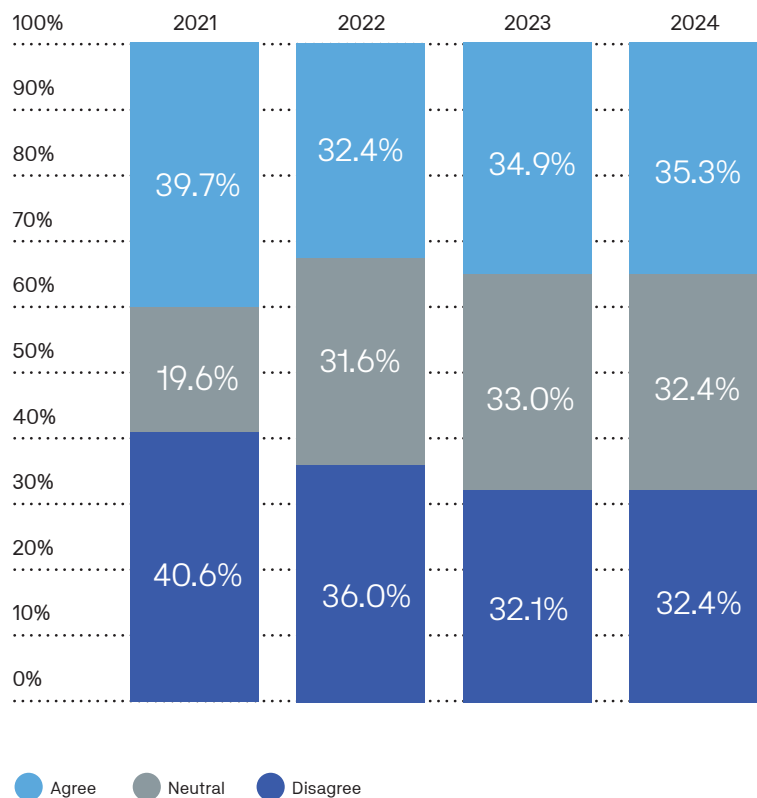
‘International students from China are potentially reducing the quality of education at Australian universities’

Just over one-third (35 percent) agreed, a continuation of views from 2023 (35 percent) but still down from a high of 40 percent in 2021. Thirty-two percent expressed neutrality and 32 percent disagreed (Figure 71).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (28 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 71. **Perceptions of international students’ impact on quality of education**

International students from China are potentially reducing the quality of education at Australian universities



‘International students from China mean there are less places for domestic students to study in their choice of Australian university’

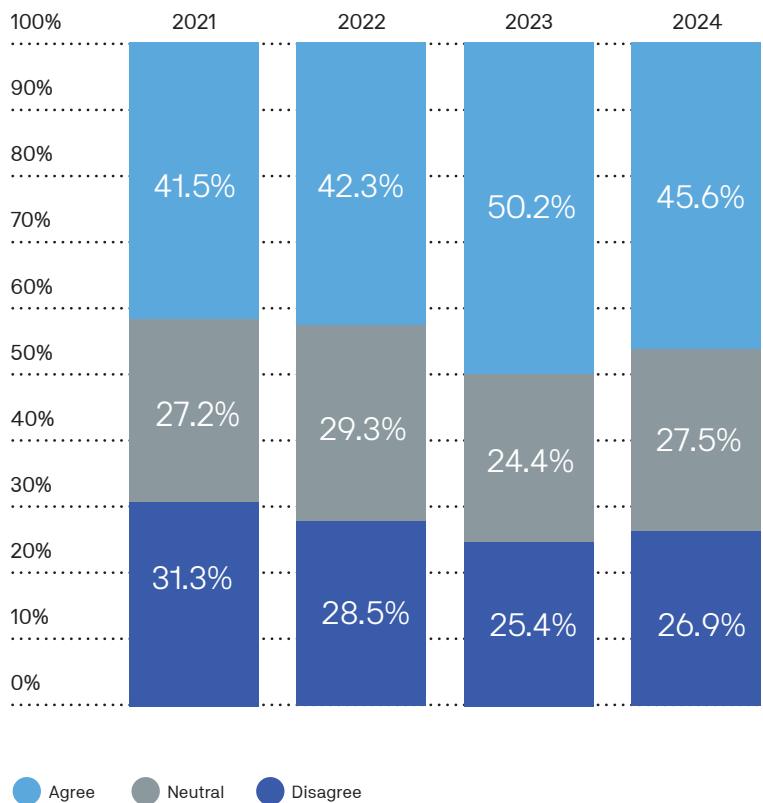
Forty-six percent of Australians agreed, down from a high of 50 percent in 2023 but still above 2022 and 2021 levels (both 42 percent). Twenty-eight percent expressed neutrality and 27 percent disagreed (Figure 72).

A state/territory divide: South Australia residents (33 percent) were less likely to agree.

An education divide: Those who completed high school (56 percent) as their highest level of education were more likely to agree.

Figure 72. Perceptions of international students’ impact on availability of university places

International students from China mean there are less places for domestic students to study in their choice of Australian university



7. University and research

7.1 Background

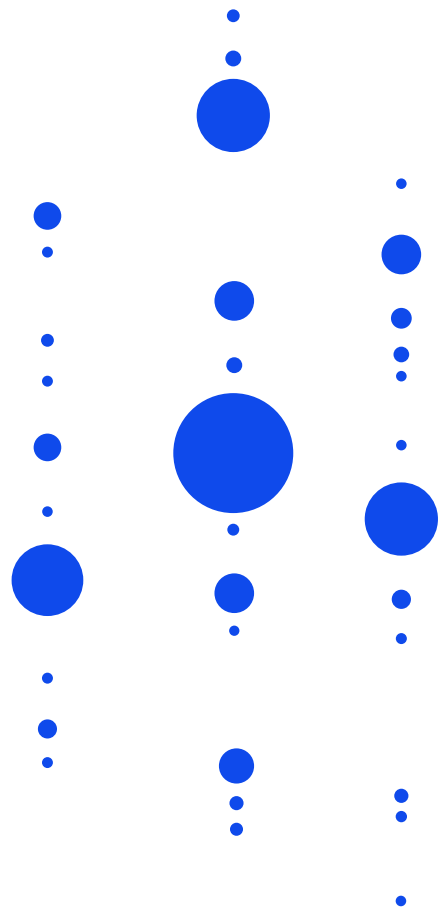
Academic exchanges and collaboration between Australia and China seem to broadly be on the decline.

In January 2024, *Radio Free Asia* reported that the Chinese Communist Party was ‘taking a direct role in the running of universities across the country amid ongoing mergers of embedded party committees with presidents’ offices’,¹²⁰ accentuating and deepening challenges to academic freedom in China.¹²¹

UTS:ACRI research examining three of the Australian Research Council’s (ARC) grants schemes over 2019-2023 showed ‘a sharp decline in funding support for collaboration with [China] relative to other international partners’, with the decline in funding support ‘more pronounced in some Australian universities and fields of research than others’.¹²²

On science and technology cooperation in particular, China’s Ambassador to Australia has called for ‘the door to be opened wider’ and for both countries to ‘continue to cooperate’.¹²³ Beijing has reportedly been pushing for a new bilateral science and technology agreement with Australia, most recently during Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s visit.¹²⁴

In March 2024, Australian Parliament extended existing defence controls in order to regulate the supply of military and dual-use goods and technologies from Australia to foreign persons and entities within Australia, and between entities overseas.¹²⁵ Commenting on the legislation, Australian Ambassador to the US Kevin Rudd said it was ‘going to be harder and harder, as [Australia and the PRC] seek to de-risk their engagements, for... normal scientific collaboration to occur’.¹²⁶



7.2 Freedom of academic speech

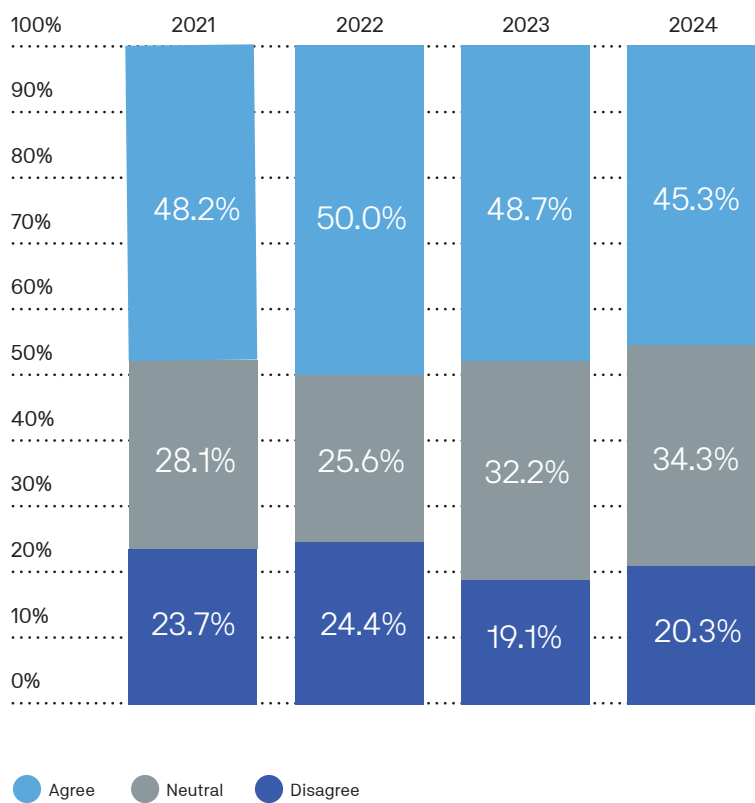
'Australian university ties with China compromise Australian freedom of speech'

Forty-five percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a four-year low and down from a high of 50 percent in 2022. Just over one-third (34 percent) expressed neutrality and 20 percent disagreed (Figure 73).

A state/territory divide: Tasmania residents (54 percent) were more likely to agree. South Australia residents (28 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 73. **Freedom of academic speech**

Australian university ties with China compromise Australian freedom of speech



7.3 Research collaborations

‘Academics from Australia should continue to partner with academics from China to undertake research projects’

Fifty-four percent of Australians agreed, a seven-point decrease from 2023 (61 percent) and 2022 (61 percent) and reflecting a three-year low. Just over one-third expressed neutrality (34 percent) and 11 percent disagreed (Figure 74).

A state/territory divide: Northern Territory residents (73 percent) were more likely to agree.

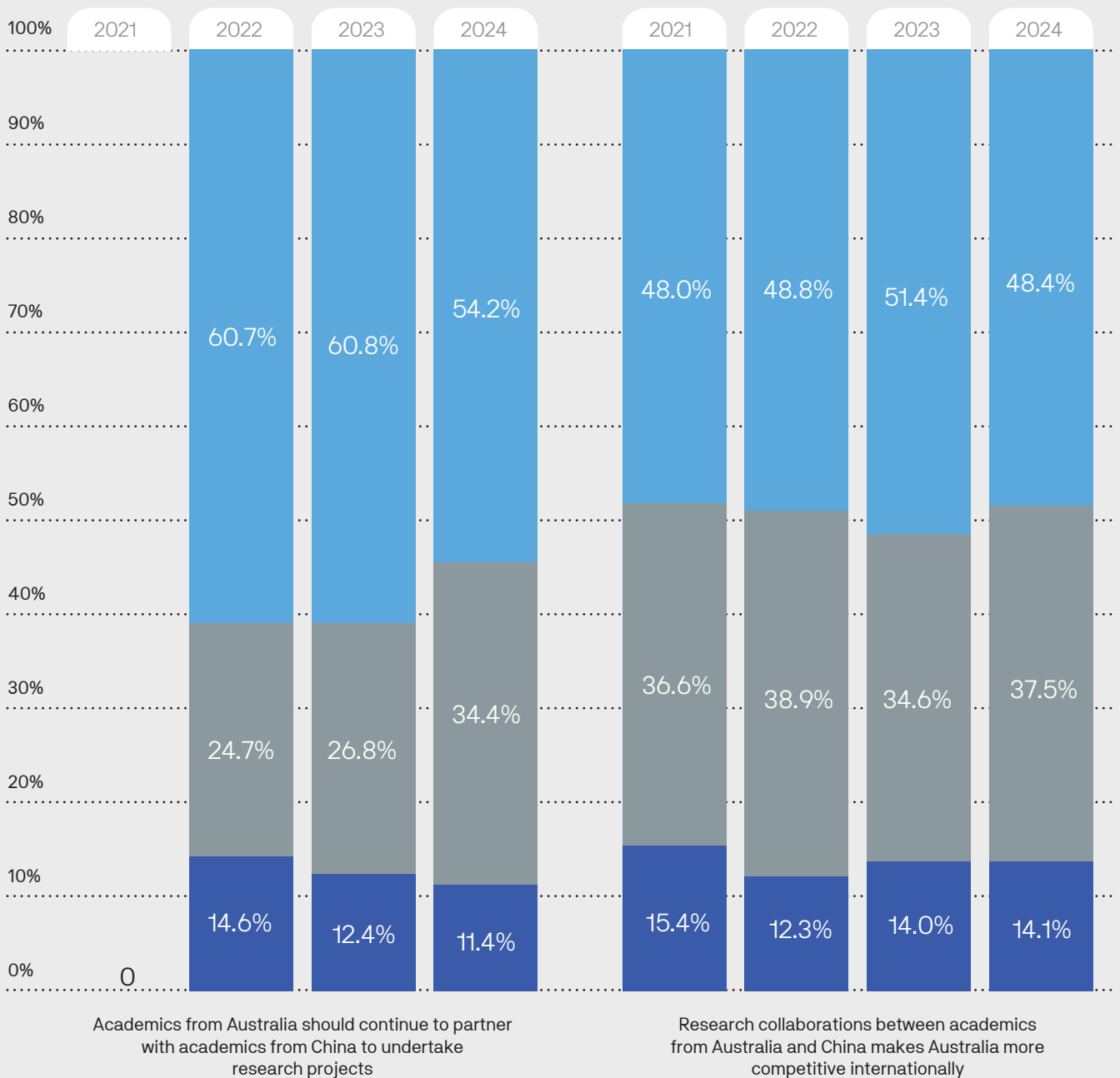
‘Research collaborations between academics from Australia and China makes Australia more competitive internationally’

Forty-eight percent of Australians agreed, a three-point decrease from 2023 (51 percent) and a return to levels of agreement expressed in 2022 (49 percent) and 2021 (48 percent). Thirty-eight percent expressed neutrality and 14 percent disagreed (Figure 74).

An age divide: Australians aged 35–55 (54 percent) were more likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (31 percent) were less likely to agree. South Australia residents (58 percent) were more likely to agree.

Figure 74. Research collaboration – General



● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree

‘It is beneficial for Australian scientists to have research connections to China’

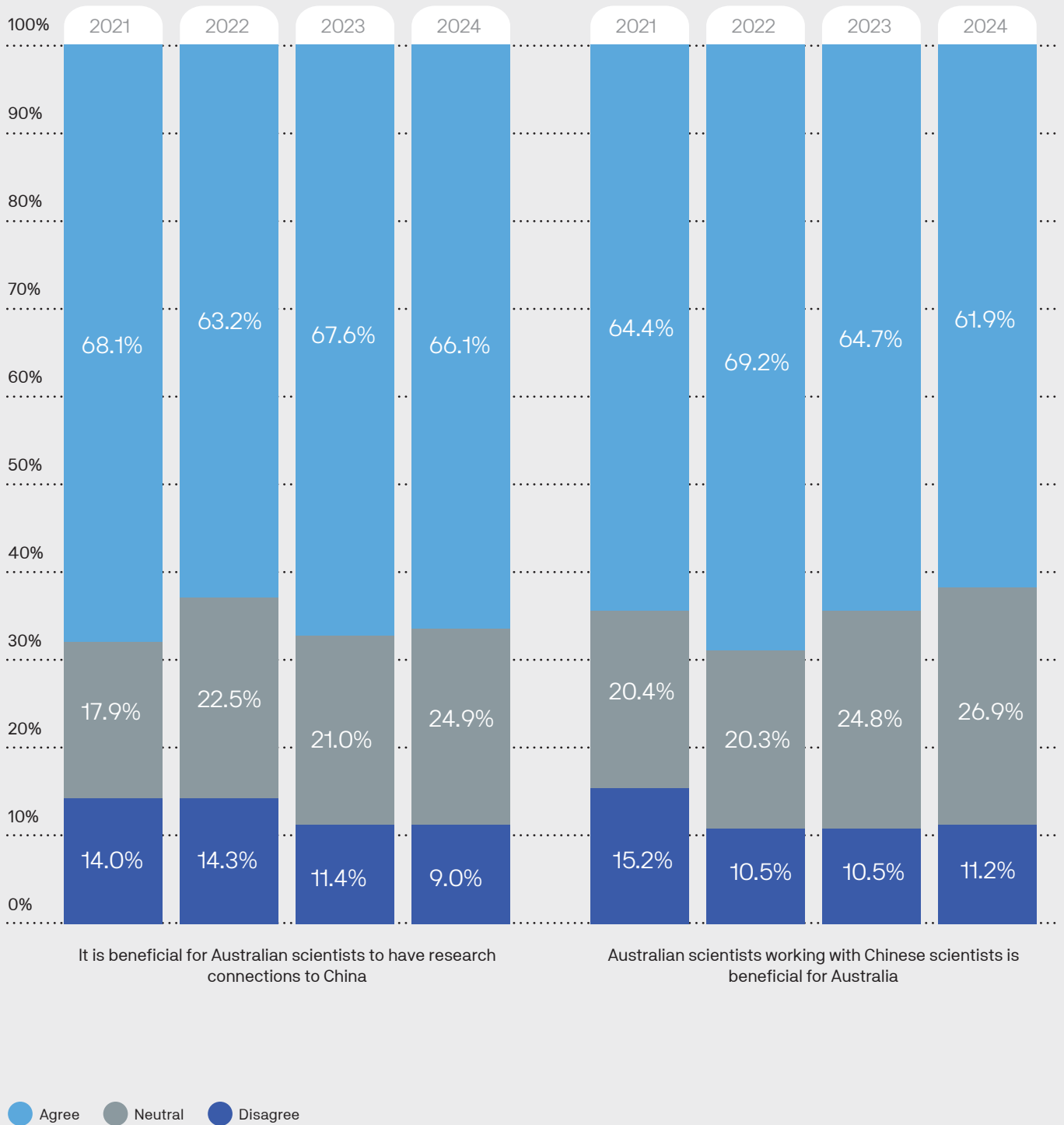
Two-thirds of Australians (66 percent) agreed, reflecting a general continuation of views over the last four years, albeit with a slight dip in 2022 (63 percent). Twenty-five percent expressed neutrality and nine percent disagreed (Figure 75).

‘Australian scientists working with Chinese scientists is beneficial for Australia’

Sixty-two percent of Australians agreed, reflecting a four-year low, down from a high of 69 percent in 2022. Twenty-seven percent expressed neutrality and 11 percent disagreed (Figure 75).

An education divide: Australians who completed a postgraduate degree (69 percent) as their highest level of education were more likely to agree. Those who completed high school (52 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 75. Research collaboration – Science



8. Competition and cooperation

8.1 Background

The Australian government has continued working towards forging closer relations with its neighbours, particularly Southeast Asian nations and Pacific Island nations, as it competes with Beijing for regional influence.

In August 2023, the Australian government announced a new *International Development Policy*, setting out an updated framework for Australia's development cooperation program.¹²⁷ While China is not mentioned by name, its role in motivating the priorities within the policy is clear, with the policy providing an 'effective, transparent and accountable' alternative to Chinese financing.

Australia hosted the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit 2024 to mark 50 years since Australia became ASEAN's first external partner. While Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Marles had said prior to the commencement of the summit, 'We will talk about China in the sense that they are part of the global landscape, but this meeting is not about China',¹²⁸ China was nonetheless a significant feature.¹²⁹

Over the last year, Australia has upgraded ties with various ASEAN nations, for example elevating relationships with Vietnam to a comprehensive strategic partnership,¹³⁰ and the Philippines¹³¹ and Laos to strategic partnerships.¹³² It has also supported Indonesia's bid to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)¹³³ and provided funding for maritime security,¹³⁴ climate¹³⁵ and health,¹³⁶ among other areas.

The Australian government has also kept a focus on nurturing relationships with Pacific Island nations, signing an updated Vuvale Partnership with Fiji in October 2023¹³⁷ and the Falepili Union treaty with Tuvalu, which requires mutual agreement on Tuvalu's engagement with any other country or entity on security or defence-related matters, in November.¹³⁸ It also signed a bilateral security agreement with Papua New Guinea in December.¹³⁹

Beijing has taken aim at rhetoric employed by Australian politicians up until around 2022 referring to the South Pacific as its 'backyard' or 'sphere of influence',¹⁴⁰ telling Pacific Island leaders their nations are 'not the "backyard" of any major country'. The Albanese government has tended away from such rhetoric during its time in office. On the China factor in Australia's relations with Pacific Island nations, Australian government ministers have kept the focus high-level when discussing the need for engagement with Pacific Island nations,¹⁴¹ while the opposition has been more forthright in making the connection.¹⁴²

Competition between Australia and China for influence in the region has not precluded some cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

For example, in March this year, Australian Federal Police and China's Ministry of Public Security recommitted to agreements on combating illicit drug trafficking and transnational crime.¹⁴³

The National Foundation for Australia-China Relations, administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, has continued through its grants program 'to support and find ways to engage constructively with China'.¹⁴⁴ And at the conclusion of Prime Minister Albanese's November 2023 visit to China, a statement on joint outcomes was released which laid out an agreement to continue or expand engagement in political dialogue; bilateral trade; climate change, energy and environment; people-to-people links; and the facilitation of exchanges.¹⁴⁵

8.2 Competition for regional influence

'It is beneficial for Australia to build closer relationships with Southeast Asian nations, including through increased aid assistance, to counter China's influence in the region'

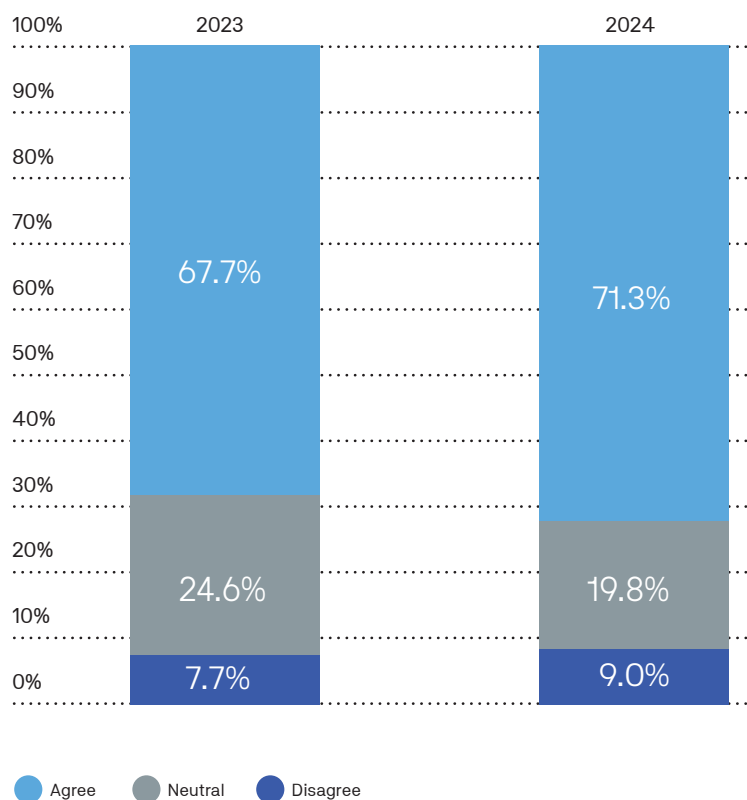
Just over seven in 10 Australians (71 percent) agreed, a three-point increase from 2023 (68 percent). Twenty percent expressed neutrality and nine percent disagreed (Figure 76).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (84 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (55 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (81 percent) and Queensland residents (78 percent) were more likely to agree. New South Wales residents (63 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 76. Building closer relationships with Southeast Asian nations to counter China's influence

It is beneficial for Australia to build closer relationships with Southeast Asian nations, including through increased aid assistance, to counter China's influence in the region



'It is beneficial for Australia to build closer relationships with Pacific Island nations, including through increased aid assistance, in order to counter China's influence in the region'

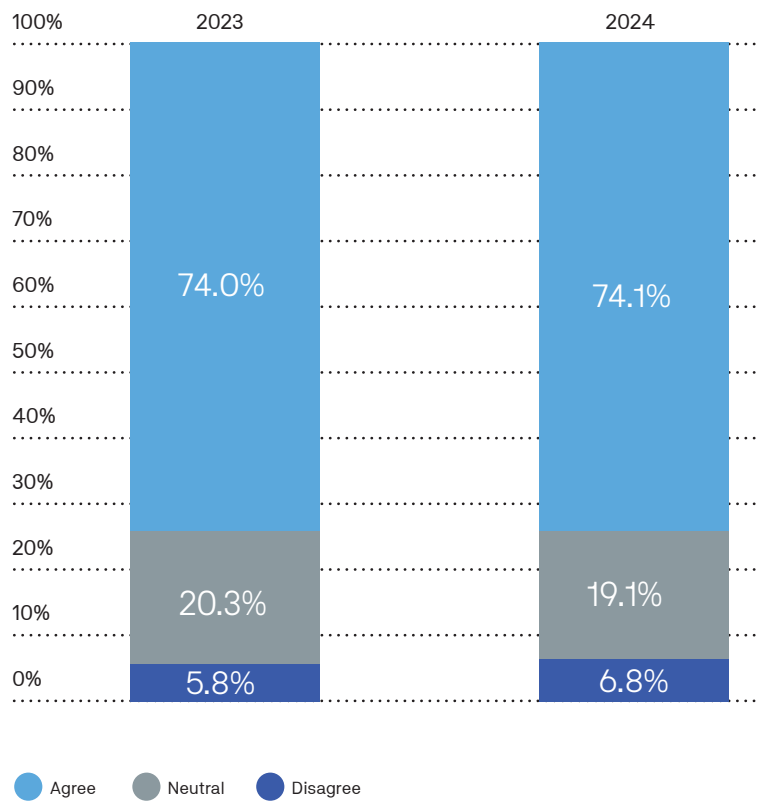
Nearly three-quarters of Australians (74 percent) agreed, a continuation of views from 2023 (74 percent). Nineteen percent expressed neutrality and seven percent disagreed (Figure 77).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (84 percent) were more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18–34 (59 percent) were less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (83 percent) were more likely to agree. New South Wales residents (71 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 77. **Building closer relationships with Pacific Island nations to counter China's influence**

It is beneficial for Australia to build closer relationships with Pacific Island nations, including through increased aid assistance, in order to counter China's influence in the region



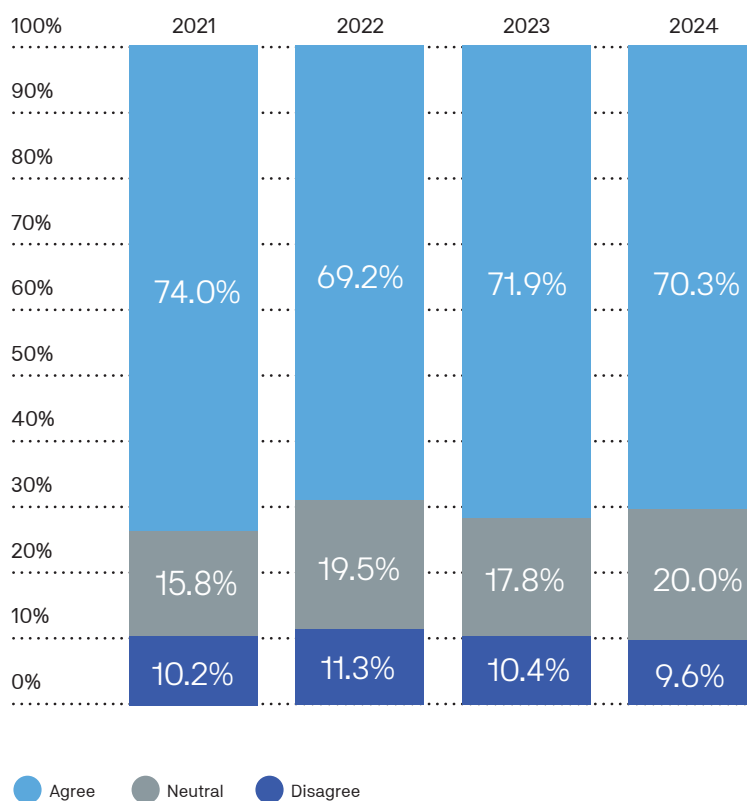
8.3 Global and regional cooperation

'It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on global issues, such as climate change and global health'

Seven in 10 Australians (70 percent) agreed, a general continuation of views from 2023 (72 percent) and 2022 (69 percent), down from a high of 74 percent in 2021. Twenty percent expressed neutrality and 10 percent disagreed (Figure 78).

Figure 78. **Benefits of global cooperation**

It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on global issues, such as climate change and global health



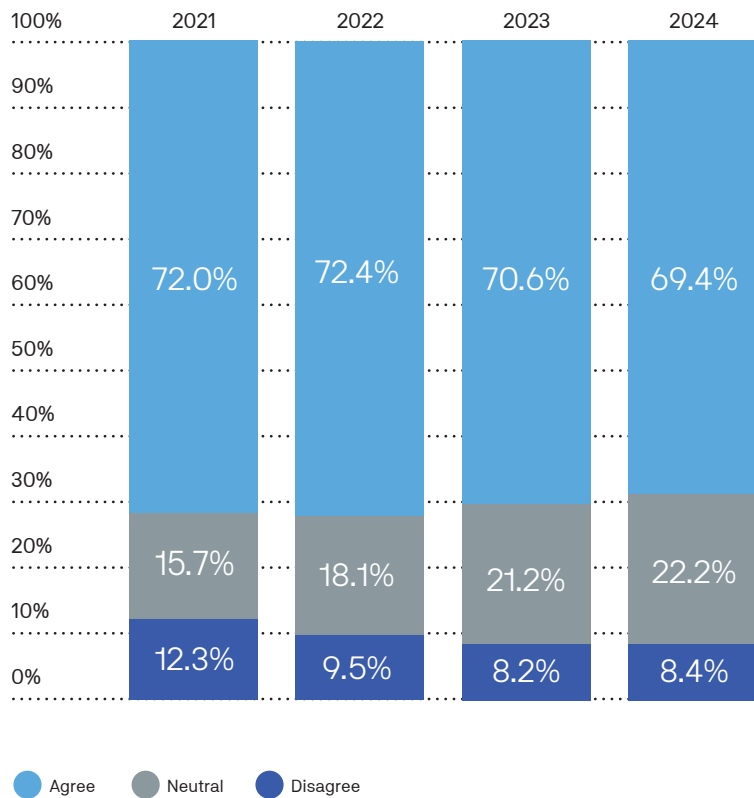
'It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on regional issues, such as ending malaria in the Pacific'

Sixty-nine percent of Australians agreed, reflecting an incremental but steady decrease over the last three years, down from a high of 72 percent in 2022 and 2021. Twenty-two percent expressed neutrality and eight percent disagreed (Figure 79).

A state/territory divide: Queensland residents (52 percent) were less likely to agree.

Figure 79. **Benefits of regional cooperation**

It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on regional issues, such as ending malaria in the Pacific



Methodology



Sample

Responses were collected via an online survey with participants recruited via a commercial panel, the Online Research Unit (ORU). Responses were collected from Australian adults across all Australian states and territories with Australian Census-based quotas applied to age and gender. State quotas were set at obtaining a minimum of 200 responses from Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, a minimum of 150 from Northern Territory, a minimum of 300 from Victoria and Queensland and 400 from New South Wales. The total sample size consisted of 2015 complete responses. Responses were collected between April 28 2024 and May 9 2024. The median response time was 19.2 minutes.

Instrument

The survey consisted of several parts:

1. Respondents were first provided background information and an invitation to participate.
2. Screening questions were performed on age, gender, location and citizenship/permanent residency status.
3. Respondents then provided their level of agreement in relation to their concerns and benefits of the Australia–China relationship and support overall. Responses were gathered using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’.
4. An introductory task on ice-cream flavours was undertaken to familiarise respondents with the best–worst scaling task.
5. A best–worst scaling task was undertaken where respondents indicated the area of most concern in relation to the Australia–China relationship spanning 35 different areas.
6. Respondents were then asked to indicate their perceived level of agreement (on a seven-point Likert scale) about their concerns, benefits, or perceptions on specific dimensions of the Australia–China relationship. Respondents were randomly allocated to complete three to six questions relating to six out of 18 areas surveyed.

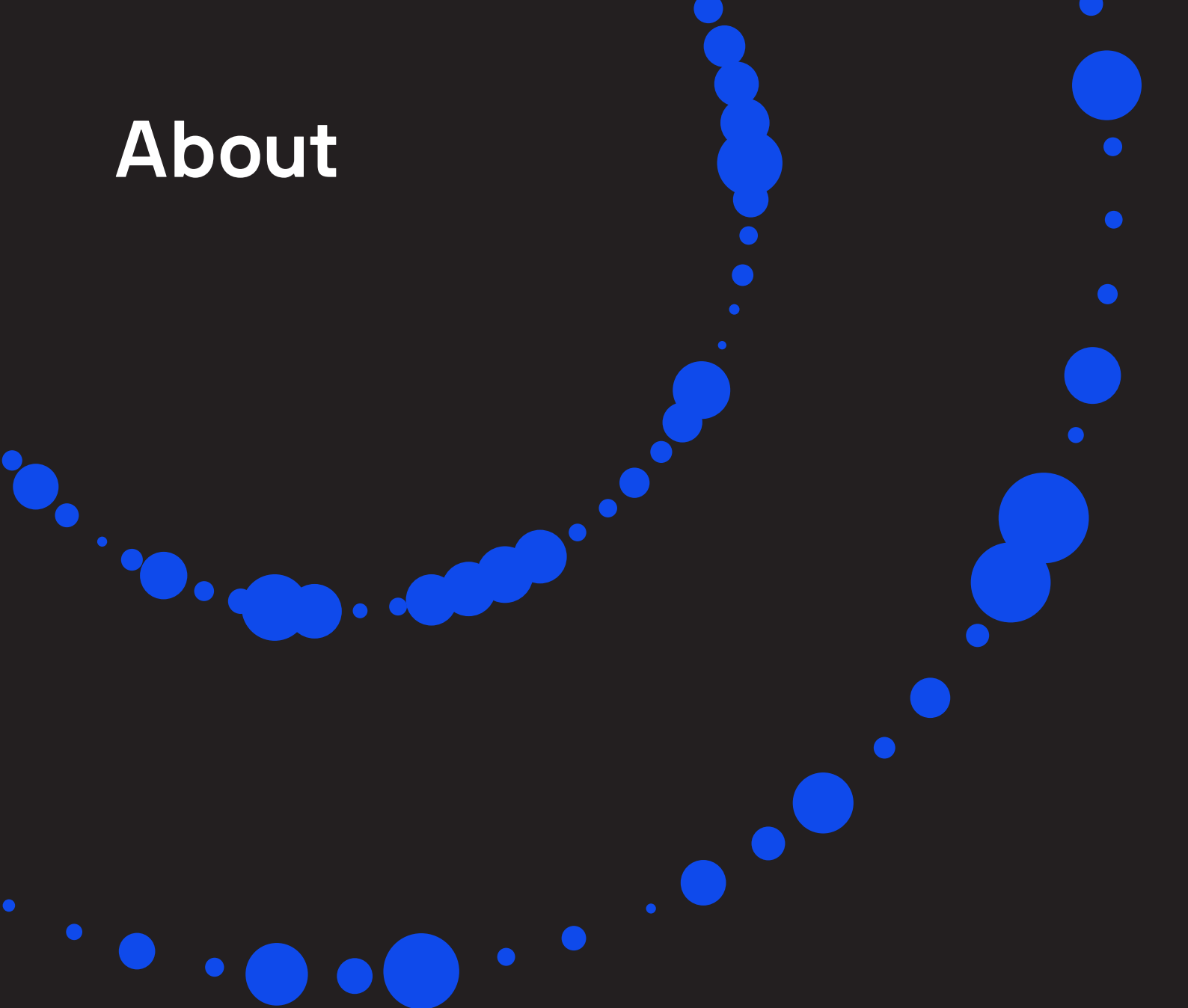
7. Respondents then completed sociodemographic questions relating to their household type, education, employment status, income, voting behaviour, political orientation, and ethnicity.
8. Respondents were then given the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback on any dimension of the Australia–China relationship.
9. Respondents then provided feedback about the survey on various dimensions such as difficulty and enjoyment.
10. Respondents were then returned to the survey panel company’s website to receive credit for their completion.

Note: The poll instrument advised respondents that ‘China’ used throughout the poll referred to the People’s Republic of China.

Analysis

Questions relating to the concerns, benefits and overall views were analysed using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis followed by structural equation modelling. Reflective scales relating to latent dimension were evaluated in terms of reliability and discriminant validity with all factor scores being above a benchmark of .707. The resulting Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeded 0.5 in all cases to establish convergent validity, whilst the resulting Cronbach Alpha’s exceeded 0.75 and Composite Reliabilities all exceeded .78 to establish reliability. Discriminant validity was established by confirming the AVE exceeded the corresponding squared correlation between latent scores. The structural model relating concerns and benefits to overall support had a norm fit index of .961 above the acceptable benchmark of .9 to indicate incremental fit, with a standardised root mean square residual of 0.026, significantly below the suggested benchmark of .08.

About



About the authors



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Elena Collinson is Manager, Research Analysis at the Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney (UTS:ACRI).

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Paul Burke is a Professor of Marketing and Deputy Director of the Centre for Business Intelligence and Data Analytics (BIDA) at the University of Technology Sydney's Business School.

He is a leading expert in the field of applied market research, particularly quantitative methods utilising experimental design, choice modelling, and best-worst scaling.

Professor Burke designs primary research projects using experimental design techniques and innovative survey approaches, such as best-worst scaling, as well as standard methods integrating hybrid choice, structural equation modelling (for attitudinal models), cluster and discriminant analysis (for segmentation), and regression analysis (e.g. probit). His work models consumer and human behaviour, including applications to product and service evaluation, social well-being and forecasting, with numerous projects involving mix-methods including those in health and well-being, education, employee, stakeholder and community preferences, and issues around rural and remote workforce participation.

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About the Australia-China Relations Institute

The Australia–China Relations Institute (UTS:ACRI) is an independent, non-partisan research institute established in 2014 by the University of Technology Sydney. Chinese studies centres exist in other Australian universities. UTS:ACRI, however, is Australia’s first and only research institute devoted to studying the relationship of these countries.

UTS:ACRI seeks to inform Australia’s engagement with China through research, analysis and dialogue grounded in scholarly rigour.

 australiachinarelations.org



About the Centre for Business Intelligence & Data Analytics

The speed and scale at which data is collected has changed significantly from quarterly sales reports to second-by-second data on inventory held in warehouses across the globe.

But whether it's government, industry or community organisations, just having access to data doesn't often lead to improved performance or optimisation.

Evidence-based business intelligence and analytics is critical for strategic and tactical decision making. It enables organisations to effectively and efficiently capture and apply data insights from market trends, consumer needs, behaviours and opinions to make evidence-based, strategic, decisions and boost productivity.

At the Centre for Business Intelligence & Data Analytics (BIDA), we specialise in finding new ways to build business intelligence through the capture, analysis and applications of data insights.

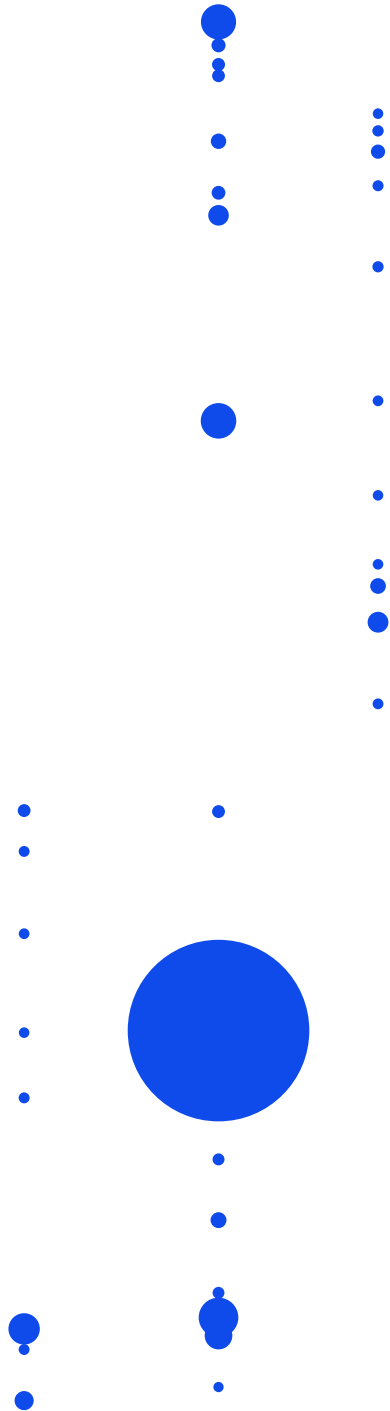
For businesses, our approach enables an in depth understanding of an organisation and provides actionable insights such as anticipating consumer behaviour, formulating optimal pricing models and strategies and boosting overall productivity of an organisation through better use of data.

For government and community organisations we are using data to grow business intelligence, creating evidence-based approaches to inform and engage with citizens, while also helping guide own internal operations. Our research builds capacity to provide better services spanning public transport, education, health, environment and public safety.

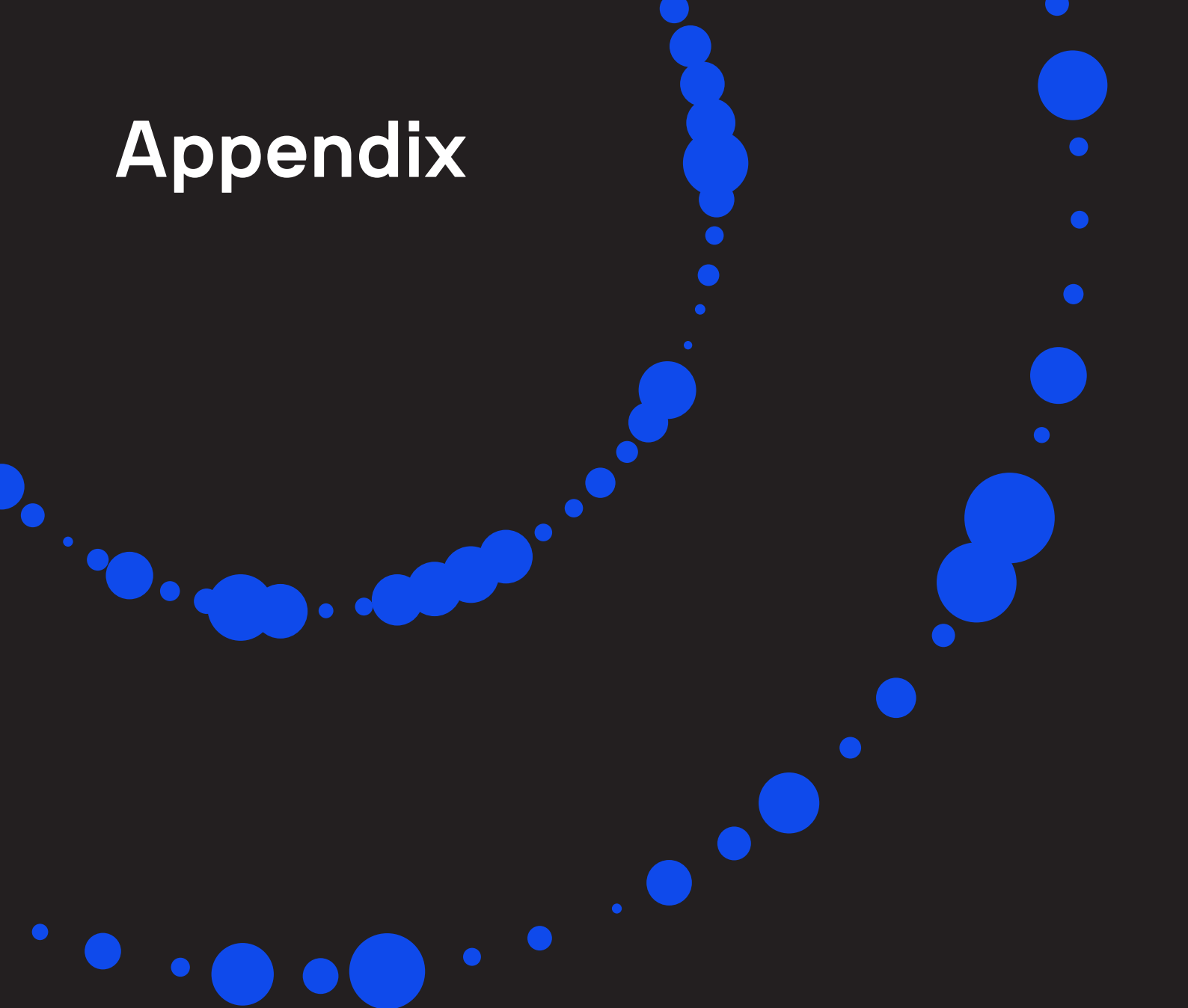
Through our research and collaborations, we are developing theoretical and applied models, enabling organisations to be well informed, responsive and agile.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Professor James Laurenceson, Director of UTS:ACRI, and Professor Wanning Sun, Deputy Director of UTS:ACRI, for their review of the report, Amy Ma, Events and Communications Officer at UTS:ACRI for assisting with project-planning and data-checking, Kristin Pedder of KJP Consulting for her assistance with editing the report and Dr Corey Lee Bell, Project and Research Officer at UTS:ACRI, for proofreading and data-checking. They would also like to thank Claudia Iacovella of claudesign for work on the report's graphic design.



Appendix



Overall views on the Australia-China relationship

Table 1A Support for Australia building stronger connections and ties, and having a strong relationship with China (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia should try to build strong connections with China	2024	3.3	5.5	6.2	23.6	30.5	23.2	7.7
	2023	3.4	3.5	6.2	23.8	32.0	22.0	9.2
	2022	3.7	5.0	7.7	23.0	29.6	23.2	8.0
	2021	4.5	4.8	7.1	21.5	27.6	27.2	7.2
Australia should build strong ties with China	2024	3.7	5.0	7.7	25.8	28.7	21.0	8.0
	2023	3.5	3.7	8.7	25.6	30.2	20.6	7.9
	2022	3.9	5.5	8.3	25.4	27.6	21.6	7.8
	2021	4.8	5.5	7.9	24.2	28.1	22.5	7.0
Australia should have a strong relationship with China	2024	3.3	4.1	5.8	24.1	30.7	23.9	8.2
	2023	3.5	2.9	6.7	25.1	29.1	24.5	8.5
	2022	3.3	5.0	7.3	22.2	29.0	25.4	8.0
	2021	4.0	4.5	6.9	21.3	28.3	27.3	7.7
2024 AVERAGE		3.4	4.8	6.6	24.5	30.0	22.7	8.0

Table 2A Predictors of support for Australia building stronger connections and ties, and having a strong relationship with China

	Impact on support overall	Importance (%)
Benefits of Australia's relationship with China	0.73	40.27
Concerns about Australia's relationship with China	-0.19	10.19
Satisfaction with the Australian government's management of China relations	0.35	19.06
Support for a harder Australian government line on China	-0.29	15.77
Mistrust of the Chinese government	-0.27	14.71

Table 3A **Concerns about Australia's relationship with China (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I am concerned about Australia's relationship with China	2024	1.1	3.7	8.4	20.5	28.3	24.5	13.5
	2023	1.4	3.5	6.8	17.5	30.9	26.7	13.4
	2022	1.5	1.9	5.2	15.8	30.7	26.7	18.4
	2021	0.7	2.5	3.8	15.5	28.9	31.1	17.5
I am very apprehensive about the nature of Australia's relationship with China	2024	1.5	4.9	9.2	25.5	26.5	20.7	11.8
	2023	1.9	4.8	9.2	23.6	28.3	20.7	11.8
	2022	1.2	2.8	6.5	21.7	30.1	22.6	15.3
	2021	0.8	3.2	5.5	22.8	29.9	23.9	13.9
I am worried about how Australia and China interact with each other in a number of areas	2024	1.0	3.1	7.5	19.9	29.6	25.3	13.5
	2023	1.1	3.3	5.8	19.2	32.8	25.1	12.9
	2022	1.3	2.1	4.5	16.8	29.9	29.5	15.9
	2021	1.0	1.5	3.8	13.9	30.3	32.5	16.9
I hold a lot of concerns about the Australia-China bilateral relationship	2024	1.3	4.5	8.7	22.6	27.0	22.8	13.2
	2023	1.3	3.9	8.2	23.0	28.4	23.0	12.3
	2022	1.3	2.3	4.7	18.1	29.7	27.2	16.7
	2021	0.8	2.6	4.4	20.2	28.7	29.6	13.8
2024 AVERAGE		1.22	4.0	8.4	22.1	27.8	23.3	13.0

Table 4A **Benefits of Australia's relationship with China (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
It is very beneficial for Australia to have a working relationship with China	2024	2.7	2.8	4.1	16.7	29.4	28.9	15.5
	2023	2.5	2.3	3.6	16.3	26.9	31.1	17.2
	2022	3.5	4.0	4.8	15.1	26.7	30.7	15.2
	2021	3.1	3.5	4.3	15.7	23.9	32.4	17.1
I believe the nature of Australia's relationship with China is of great value for Australia	2024	4.1	4.9	6.8	22.4	28.1	24.5	9.3
	2023	3.4	4.0	9.2	22.1	27.8	22.6	10.9
	2022	4.8	6.3	9.8	22.3	27.3	21.9	7.7
	2021	4.2	6.8	7.9	19.5	28.3	25.3	8.1
I believe how Australia and China interact with each other in a number of areas provides many benefits for Australia	2024	2.7	5.1	6.8	22.7	30.9	23.3	8.5
	2023	3.3	4.3	6.4	22.6	29.2	25.6	8.6
	2022	3.2	5.8	8.0	22.9	29.1	23.4	7.6
	2021	3.7	4.9	6.5	20.9	29.1	27.1	7.8
Australia's relationship with China is positive for Australia	2024	4.1	6.7	11.3	26.4	28.2	18.6	4.7
	2023	5.3	6.4	10.7	24.6	27.4	19.3	6.2
	2022	6.0	9.3	13.3	27.3	23.7	16.0	4.3
	2021	5.7	10.3	11.9	23.2	27.1	16.8	5.1
2024 AVERAGE		3.4	4.9	7.2	22.0	29.1	23.8	9.5

Table 5A **Mistrust of the Chinese government (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I have a lot of mistrust towards the Chinese government in its dealings with Australia	2024	1.7	2.8	7.1	19.2	24.8	22.3	22.1
	2023	2.1	3.2	6.6	19.3	23.6	22.5	22.8
	2022	1.6	3.2	5.9	16.7	24.6	22.1	26.0
	2021	1.6	2.8	4.3	16.0	23.5	26.1	25.7
The Chinese government cannot be trusted in its dealings with Australia	2024	2.0	2.3	6.9	21.6	25.1	20.4	21.7
	2023	2.2	3.0	7.6	22.8	24.5	18.5	21.3
	2022	1.9	3.0	5.7	19.9	26.2	21.1	22.2
	2021	1.2	3.1	5.5	19.3	23.4	21.9	25.6
It is difficult to believe the Chinese government when it comes to its dealings with Australia	2024	1.4	2.4	5.2	20.1	25.3	23.5	22.2
	2023	1.3	2.5	5.6	19.2	25.2	23.4	22.8
	2022	1.6	3.0	5.9	17.3	22.7	25.9	23.6
	2021	1.0	2.2	4.0	15.4	24.6	27.2	25.7
I am sceptical of the Chinese government when it comes to its dealings with Australia	2024	1.5	2.2	4.7	17.0	27.7	24.8	22.1
	2023	2.0	2.1	4.2	17.6	27.9	24.5	21.7
	2022	1.6	2.4	3.9	15.9	25.3	25.6	25.3
	2021	0.8	1.5	4.0	14.1	24.1	28.6	27.0
The Australian government should be suspicious of the Chinese government when it comes to having dealings with them	2024	1.0	2.6	4.8	17.6	26.9	24.1	23.0
	2023	1.7	2.0	5.3	17.7	27.1	24.4	21.8
	2022	1.3	2.6	4.5	16.3	27.2	23.9	24.2
	2021	0.9	2.2	4.7	15.7	25.1	25.6	25.7
2024 AVERAGE		1.5	2.5	5.7	19.1	26.0	23.0	22.2

Table 6A Satisfaction with the Australian government's management of China relations (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government is managing Australia's relationship with China well	2024	6.8	9.5	13.5	29.8	26.3	11.6	2.4
	2023	5.3	9.8	15.8	30.3	24.2	12.3	2.4
	2022	10.8	14.2	17.9	24.9	18.1	11.1	3.1
	2021	9.0	14.7	19.8	25.9	17.3	10.1	3.3
I believe the Australian government is doing a good job in managing Australia's relationship with China	2024	6.7	10.0	14.3	28.0	26.5	11.3	3.1
	2023	5.9	9.1	15.3	28.9	25.6	13.2	2.2
	2022	10.5	13.5	18.6	22.9	18.7	12.3	3.6
	2021	8.1	14.0	19.6	24.0	19.4	11.5	3.5
I am satisfied with the Australian government's management of Australia's relationship with China	2024	7.5	10.1	13.5	30.3	24.3	11.4	2.9
	2023	5.7	10.2	16.9	28.8	23.6	12.9	2.1
	2022	10.9	13.7	18.1	23.8	18.3	11.2	4.1
	2021	8.1	15.3	19.7	25.0	17.2	11.4	3.3
2024 AVERAGE		7.0	9.9	13.8	29.4	25.7	11.4	2.8

Table 7A **Support for a harder Australian government line on China (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I believe the Australian government should take a harder line with respect to its relationship with China	2024	2.2	4.3	8.6	27.2	25.9	18.4	13.3
	2023	2.8	6.0	9.3	28.2	24.1	18.0	11.7
	2022	3.6	5.4	10.0	25.0	23.9	19.8	12.4
	2021	2.0	4.6	7.7	23.4	26.3	19.0	17.1
I believe the Australian government should take a harder line with respect to its policies dealing with China	2024	2.0	3.6	8.2	25.9	27.0	19.6	13.7
	2023	2.4	5.2	8.4	26.9	25.6	18.8	12.9
	2022	3.0	4.9	7.7	23.9	26.9	20.1	13.7
	2021	1.9	3.9	7.3	22.1	25.4	21.6	17.8
Australia should be harder when it comes to dealing with China	2024	2.0	3.7	8.8	27.4	25.2	19.2	13.6
	2023	2.4	5.3	10.3	28.0	24.7	17.4	12.1
	2022	3.0	5.4	9.5	23.8	25.3	19.7	13.4
	2021	2.2	4.7	8.2	23.5	24.5	20.0	17.0
2024 AVERAGE		2.1	3.9	8.6	26.8	26.0	19.1	13.6

Table 8A Responsibility for improving the Australia-China relationship (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The responsibility for improving the relationship between Australia and China lies with both countries	2024	0.9	1.6	3.1	15.6	22.1	33.6	23.0
	2023	1.7	1.4	3.9	15.5	21.7	32.9	23.1
	2022	1.6	1.8	3.9	15.2	19.2	32.8	25.7
	2021	1.9	2.2	2.8	13.6	21.2	32.7	25.6
The responsibility for improving the relationship between Australia and China lies with Australia	2024	5.1	11.8	16.2	35.5	18.8	10.0	2.6
	2023	5.9	12.0	17.1	34.0	19.4	8.7	3.2
	2022	6.0	12.6	15.7	34.2	18.7	9.4	3.5
	2021	7.8	14.3	15.3	32.6	18.2	8.4	3.4
The responsibility for improving the relationship between Australia and China lies with China	2024	2.3	7.8	10.9	31.2	22.3	17.6	7.9
	2023	2.3	7.4	12.1	32.6	23.2	14.6	7.9
	2022	2.8	7.8	11.7	32.7	22.1	14.6	8.5
	2021	3.0	9.1	10.8	29.4	23.1	15.2	9.4

Table 9A Improvement of the Australia-China relationship in the next three years (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australia-China relationship will improve in the next three years	2024	5.0	7.1	12.0	43.2	18.9	10.9	2.9
	2023	4.6	7.8	13.6	41.7	19.4	10.5	2.5
	2022	5.6	9.8	15.4	41.8	16.5	9.0	2.1
	2021	5.2	10.2	14.6	42.6	17.2	8.8	1.5

Politics and political communication

Table 10A Political party best placed to handle Australia's China policy (%)

	Year	Australian Labor Party	Liberal/Nationals	Greens	Other political party
Which political party is best placed to handle Australia's China policy?	2024	39.9	33.7	8.5	17.9
	2023	48.8	28.5	8.9	13.9
	2022	35.4	35.6	-	29.1
	2021	-	-	-	-

Table 11A Management of China policy: An issue that will impact voting behaviour at the upcoming federal election?

	Yes	No	I don't know
Will management of China policy be an issue that will impact your vote in the next federal election?	34.9	29.1	35.9

Table 12A Support for the Australian government's communication of disputes through diplomatic channels (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government's disputes with the Chinese government are better communicated through diplomatic channels rather than public statements	2024	2.4	4.5	7.0	25.5	23.5	25.5	11.6
	2023	1.9	4.8	6.2	27.8	21.2	25.8	12.3
	2022	2.5	4.2	3.8	26.8	22.8	24.9	14.8
	2021	2.8	5.4	6.0	25.1	20.6	25.4	14.6

Military and security

Table 13A **China as a security threat (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
China is a security threat to Australia	2024	1.8	3.9	3.9	19.3	27.2	22.4	21.5
	2023	0.9	2.3	3.6	20.8	22.2	20.8	29.4
	2022	0.4	2.3	6.6	18.1	25.5	25.5	21.6
	2021	1.9	3.7	7.4	20.4	14.8	20.4	31.5

Table 14A **Possibility of military conflict with China within three years (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Military conflict with China within three years is a serious possibility	2024	4.8	7.5	11.0	26.8	23.7	18.0	8.3
	2023	4.5	6.3	13.1	24.9	24.0	18.6	8.6
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 15A **Support for an increase in Australia's defence spending (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government is right to increase defence spending, to balance, among other considerations, China's growing military might	2024	3.1	3.1	6.2	23.5	29.2	18.6	16.4
	2023	1.8	5.9	5.5	20.1	25.6	23.3	17.8
	2022	3.1	1.9	3.4	21.8	27.2	22.2	20.3
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 16A Support for an increase in Australia’s defence spending even if it means budget cuts in other areas (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government is right to increase defence spending, even if it means budget cuts in other areas, for example health and education, to balance, among other considerations, China’s growing military might	2024	3.6	5.3	10.2	28.0	26.2	15.6	11.1
	2023	8.5	7.1	9.8	24.1	17.9	21.9	10.7
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 17A Acquisition of nuclear submarines under AUKUS (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government’s plan to acquire nuclear submarines under the Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) trilateral security partnership will help keep Australia secure from a military threat from China	2024	7.1	3.5	9.7	31.4	28.8	12.8	6.6
	2023	6.3	10.4	16.3	22.6	19.5	13.1	11.8
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 18A Trade and security blocs (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia should form trade and security blocs with other countries that deliberately exclude China	2024	4.4	6.1	11.9	34.1	22.4	13.5	7.5
	2023	2.6	11.7	13.2	32.2	16.8	16.0	7.5
	2022	4.1	7.5	14.9	32.9	18.2	12.6	9.9
	2021	3.4	10.0	12.4	30.8	18.9	12.1	12.3

Table 19A **Regional stability and security (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia's relationship with China contributes to regional stability and security	2024	1.8	5.3	11.0	28.9	30.7	18.4	3.9
	2023	3.2	2.7	7.3	35.6	22.8	21.5	6.8
	2022	3.5	8.1	9.3	29.1	22.5	21.3	6.2
	2021	3.7	1.9	16.7	25.9	27.8	16.7	7.4

Table 20A **Defence of Taiwan (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
If China launches a military attack on Taiwan, Australia should send troops to go to Taiwan's defence	2024	11.1	10.6	8.0	35.4	14.6	13.7	6.6
	2023	10.5	8.2	16.8	27.7	13.6	11.8	11.4
	2022	8.1	12.0	13.6	27.1	16.3	16.7	6.2
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 21A **Conflict over Taiwan between the US and China (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
In the event of conflict between US and China over Taiwan, Australia should remain neutral	2024	5.3	9.6	15.4	27.2	16.2	17.1	9.2
	2023	10.6	5.5	13.8	21.1	17.9	16.1	15.1
	2022	8.9	11.2	15.1	22.9	19.8	10.9	11.2
	2021	3.6	3.6	10.9	29.1	27.3	18.2	7.3
In the event of a military conflict between China and the United States over Taiwan, Australia should lend military support to the United States	2024	6.1	5.7	8.7	33.6	14.9	16.6	14.4
	2023	5.5	5.5	7.3	29.8	17.4	23.9	10.6
	2022	5.1	5.4	8.9	24.5	23.7	19.1	13.2
	2021	5.4	5.4	1.8	42.9	12.5	19.6	12.5

Table 22A Support for banning apps such as TikTok and WeChat (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia should ban Chinese-owned apps such as TikTok and WeChat	2024	4.3	4.3	6.5	25.8	19.8	17.9	21.4
	2023	5.1	5.3	7.9	21.2	17.0	17.2	26.3
	2022	5.9	9.9	8.9	28.0	13.4	16.7	17.2
	2021	4.3	9.2	10.6	26.0	17.0	13.3	19.6

Table 23A Public attribution of Chinese state-sponsored cybersecurity attacks (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government is right to publicly call out any Chinese state-sponsored cybersecurity attacks on Australia's digital systems	2024	0.6	1.5	2.6	13.8	15.1	26.1	40.2
	2023	1.5	0.8	2.1	14.1	15.8	24.6	41.1
	2022	0.5	1.6	3.0	13.8	15.1	26.2	39.7
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 24A Espionage conducted by China (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Espionage conducted by China against Australia is more concerning than espionage against Australia conducted by other countries	2024	3.0	4.5	6.8	26.6	25.1	18.6	15.3
	2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 25A Espionage – Country comparisons (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Espionage against Australia conducted by China is a major problem	2024	0.8	1.0	5.6	25.3	26.3	23.5	17.5
	2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Espionage against Australia conducted by the United States is a major problem	2024	6.1	9.9	10.2	34.8	21.6	11.4	6.1
	2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Espionage against Australia conducted by Russia is a major problem	2024	2.8	1.0	4.6	25.6	25.3	22.0	18.7
	2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 26A The Australian government's response to espionage conducted by China against Australia (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government is successfully responding to espionage conducted by China against Australia	2024	5.0	8.1	14.4	39.5	19.4	10.3	3.3
	2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 27A Foreign interference stemming from China as more of a concern than foreign interference from other countries (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Foreign interference in Australia stemming from China is more concerning than foreign interference from other countries	2024	1.5	2.8	8.9	28.8	20.9	19.9	17.1
	2023	1.8	5.0	5.5	23.3	24.9	22.5	17.0
	2022	2.3	4.8	6.1	19.7	25.6	24.8	16.7
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 28A Foreign interference – Country comparisons (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Foreign interference in Australia stemming from China is a major problem	2024	1.3	2.0	6.8	24.7	24.0	24.2	16.9
	2023	1.6	2.9	4.4	27.3	26.3	22.9	14.6
	2022	1.5	2.5	4.1	23.1	28.7	22.8	17.3
	2021	0.6	2.4	4.5	21.0	28.6	21.0	22.0
Foreign interference in Australia stemming from the United States is a major problem	2024	4.3	7.6	11.9	33.0	21.3	10.9	10.9
	2023	4.5	9.4	9.4	33.8	22.5	13.9	6.5
	2022	5.3	9.9	13.9	32.2	20.5	10.6	7.6
	2021	5.1	9.0	14.3	34.4	20.6	11.8	4.7
Foreign interference in Australia stemming from Russia is a major problem	2024	2.6	2.8	4.1	25.0	27.6	22.7	15.3
	2023	2.3	3.9	6.0	25.6	26.1	24.3	11.7
	2022	1.5	3.3	7.1	23.3	28.4	21.8	14.7
	2021	1.8	4.9	7.6	38.4	22.2	17.3	7.8

Table 29A The Australian government's response to Chinese government interference in Australia (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government is successfully responding to Chinese government interference in Australia	2024	5.1	8.1	16.7	36.5	21.5	10.1	2.0
	2023	4.4	7.8	12.5	38.6	25.1	8.9	2.6
	2022	4.1	9.9	18.7	36.5	18.7	11.6	0.5
	2021	4.9	10.2	16.9	33.3	20.7	10.0	3.9

Table 30A The Belt and Road Initiative (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government is successfully responding to Chinese government interference in Australia	2024	1.6	1.3	4.3	39.4	17.6	20.0	15.7
	2023	0.9	1.6	5.2	38.8	15.5	16.3	21.8
	2022	1.8	3.1	2.5	35.3	17.2	19.9	20.2
	2021	1.4	1.4	3.5	40.4	14.8	18.1	20.5

Table 31A The South China Sea (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
China's artificial island-building in the South China Sea is a threat to Australia's security	2024	2.6	2.6	5.3	22.0	27.8	20.7	18.9
	2023	2.3	3.2	5.0	19.8	25.7	21.6	22.5
	2022	1.6	3.9	7.0	24.0	20.5	22.1	20.9
	2021	5.6	3.7	3.7	27.8	13.0	25.9	20.4

The United States

Table 32A Australia's relationships with the United States and China (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia can enjoy a good relationship with both China and the United States at the same time	2024	1.5	2.7	7.8	27.1	29.0	22.9	9.0
	2023	1.8	3.5	7.3	26.2	29.1	23.4	8.6
	2022	2.8	4.1	11.6	20.9	29.0	22.4	9.2
	2021	2.7	4.6	8.7	21.1	26.3	27.1	9.5
Australia's relationship with China weakens our alliance with the United States	2024	3.5	11.1	14.1	33.8	22.5	9.4	5.7
	2023	2.0	16.4	15.8	31.9	18.4	9.1	6.4
	2022	4.1	15.0	16.9	32.8	20.8	8.1	2.4
	2021	4.6	13.7	15.9	33.3	19.0	8.5	5.0

Table 33A Forced to choose? (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The United States will eventually force Australia to choose between a close relationship with Washington or a close relationship with Beijing	2024	2.2	7.6	11.5	31.9	24.1	15.7	6.9
	2023	2.9	8.6	12.0	29.0	21.7	16.8	8.9
	2022	3.8	10.7	14.3	29.5	21.6	13.0	7.1
	2021	3.7	11.0	12.6	33.7	23.1	11.4	4.5
China will eventually force Australia to choose between a close relationship with Beijing or a close relationship with Washington	2024	3.4	6.8	8.5	29.5	27.8	15.3	8.7
	2023	1.6	4.8	11.3	32.4	21.8	18.3	9.9
	2022	2.4	8.4	9.3	33.5	23.1	14.9	8.4
	2021	1.9	7.9	10.4	28.6	25.1	15.4	10.8

Table 34A The impact of a second Trump presidency (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government's balancing of its relationships with China and the US will be made more difficult if Donald Trump returns to the US presidency in 2024	2024	3.9	4.2	4.7	20.1	17.6	23.0	26.5
	2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 35A The US and China's regional influence (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
China has more influence than the US in Australia's regional neighbourhood	2024	1.2	4.9	10.0	28.7	27.5	19.1	8.6
	2023	3.2	4.3	8.3	28.2	27.4	21.2	7.5
	2022	1.1	3.1	6.6	28.0	28.4	21.6	11.2
	2021	0.9	2.5	5.7	25.9	29.5	22.8	12.7

Table 36A The US and China's willingness to mete out economic punishment over political disagreements (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The United States government is willing to use its trade and investment ties with Australia to punish Australia over political disagreements	2024	6.1	7.9	13.1	36.6	17.6	12.7	6.1
	2023	4.7	14.3	13.6	33.7	17.5	10.9	5.3
	2022	5.3	13.5	11.2	36.6	19.1	10.9	3.4
	2021	6.0	10.2	14.8	36.2	20.2	9.6	3.0
The Chinese government is willing to use its trade and investment ties with Australia to punish Australia over political disagreements	2024	0.4	2.0	3.9	18.1	21.3	28.3	26.0
	2023	1.3	2.6	3.6	19.4	17.9	27.8	27.4
	2022	1.3	2.6	4.1	18.3	21.9	27.7	24.1
	2021	1.0	1.6	3.9	16.2	17.8	25.4	34.0

Trade and investment

Table 37A **Economic overreliance on China (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia is too economically reliant on China	2024	0.5	1.3	5.8	18.5	31.5	24.1	18.3
	2023	1.1	1.6	6.5	18.7	26.8	26.6	18.7
	2022	0.6	1.3	5.1	19.2	27.8	26.8	19.2
	2021	0.0	1.5	1.8	16.4	27.9	25.1	27.2

Table 38A **The Australia-China economic relationship: Economic risk or economic opportunity? (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia's economic relationship with China is more of an economic risk than an economic opportunity	2024	1.9	6.1	13.8	31.5	24.3	12.4	10.1
	2023	2.9	5.6	13.5	31.4	26.2	12.4	7.9
	2022	1.9	6.4	9.3	31.5	25.4	19.3	6.1
	2021	1.5	6.6	11.4	27.2	24.4	19.5	9.4

Table 39A **Trade diversification (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government has been successful in efforts to diversify trade, reducing Australia's economic exposure to China	2024	2.9	6.1	10.9	36.2	26.9	13.3	3.7
	2023	2.5	4.7	13.8	35.2	29.8	11.3	2.7
	2022	4.4	7.0	14.9	31.3	25.9	12.0	4.4
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 40A **Economic engagement with China and prosperity (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Without close economic engagement with China, Australia would not be as prosperous as it currently is	2024	3.2	5.0	7.1	31.1	24.7	22.6	6.3
	2023	2.3	6.8	9.7	23.9	26.2	23.3	7.9
	2022	2.5	3.5	10.8	23.2	28.0	23.6	8.3
	2021	3.1	4.6	8.2	21.5	32.2	20.7	9.7

Table 41A **Trade with China and employment (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Trade with China has created job opportunities in Australia	2024	2.1	4.6	5.3	27.2	32.4	22.0	6.4
	2023	1.4	3.4	5.4	26.6	26.4	25.2	11.6
	2022	2.8	4.0	4.7	24.8	28.6	24.8	10.2
	2021	3.0	3.4	5.0	23.8	24.0	31.2	9.7

Table 42A **Australian government support for closer economic ties with China (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government needs to be supportive of having closer economic ties with China	2024	3.2	7.2	9.1	34.9	26.4	14.1	5.1
	2023	3.4	7.4	11.7	30.2	27.8	13.5	5.9
	2022	3.2	6.4	10.3	29.6	27.7	16.4	6.4
	2021	5.6	4.6	9.7	31.1	28.8	15.3	4.8

Table 43A The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement has been beneficial for Australia	2024	2.4	3.4	7.7	33.2	25.3	20.7	7.4
	2023	2.1	3.4	5.5	33.6	23.4	23.1	8.8
	2022	2.5	5.0	7.8	35.6	22.5	22.5	4.1
	2021	2.4	4.2	5.9	35.2	25.3	21.6	5.3

Table 44A Expansion of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government should support China's bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement which 11 countries, including Australia, signed in 2018	2024	5.1	6.3	9.5	46.5	18.1	10.6	4.0
	2023	5.2	7.3	8.0	44.6	16.6	14.6	3.6
	2022	7.7	8.3	7.7	44.9	15.7	12.6	3.1
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Australian government should support Taiwan's bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement which 11 countries, including Australia, signed in 2018	2024	1.8	2.6	3.2	34.3	23.2	20.7	14.3
	2023	1.8	0.9	3.1	32.5	20.3	24.6	16.9
	2022	1.8	3.1	3.1	26.5	23.4	23.1	19.1
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 45A Trade case study: Tourism – Economic benefit (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Tourists from China provide a major economic benefit to Australia	2024	2.8	3.2	5.2	22.1	30.4	24.9	11.4
	2023	2.0	3.3	3.8	19.1	31.1	28.2	12.5
	2022	2.5	3.4	4.4	19.9	27.9	29.4	12.5
	2021	2.4	3.7	3.1	16.4	27.9	32.1	14.4

Table 46A Trade case study: Tourism – Attracting tourists from China

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia should continue to work towards making Australia an attractive destination for Chinese tourists	2024	3.8	5.9	6.6	25.8	25.5	22.4	9.9
	2023	2.8	4.7	5.7	24.4	24.4	26.9	11.1
	2022	4.2	4.9	7.2	21.8	27.4	24.3	10.3
	2021	3.4	5.3	5.8	22.4	25.6	26.4	11.1

Table 47A Trade case study: Education – Economic benefit (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
International students from China provide a major economic benefit to Australia	2024	2.6	2.9	5.6	21.3	33.9	27.8	5.8
	2023	2.2	3.8	4.4	20.5	33.1	23.7	12.3
	2022	4.1	2.5	4.5	21.8	28.0	28.8	10.3
	2021	0.9	0.9	5.8	16.1	26.9	35.0	14.3

Table 48A Trade case study: Education – Financial overreliance by Australian universities (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australian universities are too financially reliant on international students from China	2024	1.5	1.2	4.4	20.5	22.5	26.3	23.7
	2023	0.6	1.0	4.8	16.5	28.3	24.1	24.8
	2022	1.2	0.4	9.0	14.3	28.6	20.4	26.1
	2021	0.4	2.2	0.9	15.4	25.1	28.2	27.8

Table 49A Foreign investment from China: Detrimental or beneficial? (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Foreign investment from China is more detrimental than beneficial to Australia	2024	1.5	4.0	10.0	33.4	19.3	16.8	15.0
	2023	2.0	3.8	13.5	29.8	21.8	16.1	13.0
	2022	3.1	4.2	10.3	33.3	21.9	14.0	13.3
	2021	2.1	4.7	11.9	30.5	22.2	16.1	12.4

Table 50A Foreign investment from China and employment (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Foreign investment from China has created job opportunities in Australia	2024	4.4	5.3	8.4	34.1	29.9	13.8	4.0
	2023	4.2	6.2	7.7	32.8	29.9	15.8	3.5
	2022	5.0	5.3	7.2	29.5	34.1	14.4	4.4
	2021	3.7	6.5	9.0	30.7	31.9	15.9	2.4

Table 51A Investment case study: Port of Darwin – Support for the Australian government’s decision not to cancel or vary the Landbridge lease (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government was right not to cancel or vary Chinese-owned company Landbridge’s 99-year lease of the Port of Darwin	2024	15.5	12.4	14.5	31.8	10.8	9.2	5.8
	2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 52A Investment case study: Port of Darwin – Support for the Australian government to force Landbridge to sell back the lease (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government should force Landbridge, the Chinese company that bought the 99-year-lease to the Port of Darwin in 2015, to sell the port back to the government	2024	2.0	3.3	3.8	29.2	16.6	18.4	26.6
	2023	1.8	2.7	6.6	25.2	15.7	15.9	32.0
	2022	3.0	3.9	6.1	27.5	13.6	17.1	28.8
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 53A Investment case study: Critical minerals – General limitation on foreign investment (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government should limit foreign investment from other countries (e.g., US, UK, Canada, Japan, South Korea, India, China) in Australia’s critical minerals industry	2024	2.5	5.3	6.5	23.6	20.7	22.0	19.3
	2023	3.5	6.8	10.1	21.4	19.6	21.6	17.0
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 54A Investment case study: Critical minerals – Limitation on foreign investment from China (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Chinese ownership of agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia presents a threat to Australia's food security	2024	1.1	2.7	3.8	20.3	19.9	26.5	25.7
	2023	0.5	2.2	5.8	18.6	17.9	25.9	29.0
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 55A Investment case study: Agriculture – Beneficial or detrimental? (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Chinese investment in agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia is more beneficial than detrimental to Australia's interests	2024	11.3	13.5	17.3	27.6	15.5	9.4	5.4
	2023	11.6	12.2	18.4	25.8	15.8	10.0	6.2
	2022	12.9	12.9	15.9	28.3	16.7	9.5	3.8
	2021	11.9	15.6	17.8	26.1	14.3	6.8	7.3

Table 56A Investment case study: Agriculture – Chinese ownership versus ownership by companies from other countries (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Chinese ownership of agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia is more concerning than ownership by companies from other countries	2024	1.6	3.9	5.7	24.8	21.9	24.8	17.3
	2023	1.8	4.4	6.0	21.9	24.3	21.2	20.3
	2022	2.3	3.1	6.7	23.2	27.2	21.1	16.4
	2021	2.1	4.5	6.2	21.8	21.2	22.9	21.3

Table 57A Investment case study: Agriculture - Food security concerns (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Chinese ownership of agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia presents a threat to Australia's food security	2024	1.3	2.9	7.0	19.6	24.7	23.5	21.0
	2023	1.2	3.7	6.9	20.0	23.3	20.3	24.6
	2022	1.1	2.3	7.0	20.3	26.5	22.6	20.1
	2021	1.8	4.3	5.7	17.8	26.6	21.7	22.1

Table 58A Investment case study: Residential real estate – Benefits (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Chinese investment in Australian residential real estate brings a lot of benefits for Australians (e.g., construction, new dwellings, jobs)	2024	10.4	15.5	16.2	30.3	17.0	7.1	3.5
	2023	13.2	12.7	15.1	29.8	16.6	10.0	2.7
	2022	12.0	12.0	15.6	27.0	18.9	10.4	4.1
	2021	13.2	16.5	13.7	23.4	21.9	8.5	2.7

Table 59A Investment case study: Residential real estate – Housing price pressure (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Foreign buyers from China drive up Australian housing prices	2024	0.2	1.8	2.6	15.2	18.1	28.0	34.0
	2023	1.5	1.5	4.9	19.6	20.8	24.2	27.6
	2022	0.5	1.1	4.9	14.4	24.1	26.0	29.0
	2021	1.0	1.8	5.0	10.1	22.9	31.2	28.1

Table 60A Investment case study: Residential real estate – Rental market pressure (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Chinese investors have negatively affected the rental market for residential real estate in Australia	2024	1.1	2.4	4.0	19.0	26.1	23.2	24.1
	2023	1.7	2.2	6.4	21.8	19.3	25.4	23.2
	2022	1.6	3.3	7.0	19.2	21.7	22.2	24.9
	2021	2.3	2.5	5.3	20.5	24.6	23.8	21.0

Table 61A Investment case study: Residential real estate – Investment restriction (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia should restrict the amount of investment in residential real estate that is permitted from Chinese investors	2024	0.9	0.7	2.0	13.7	20.1	21.9	40.7
	2023	1.2	1.2	5.6	13.9	19.6	22.7	35.7
	2022	1.3	2.2	3.0	13.7	16.7	21.0	42.2
	2021	2.0	1.5	3.8	14.6	16.9	23.7	37.5

Table 62A Support for business ties (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australian companies should continue to pursue business opportunities with China	2024	2.7	4.0	4.2	24.4	34.2	22.8	7.7
	2023	2.7	3.6	8.1	22.5	34.9	20.7	7.4
	2022	1.9	2.5	9.5	25.3	27.8	25.9	7.0
	2021	4.1	3.3	7.5	23.7	32.6	21.1	7.7

Table 63A **Concerns about business ties (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia should not do business with China because of their record on human rights	2024	4.8	6.6	15.2	29.0	25.1	13.1	6.3
	2023	3.8	9.3	16.0	28.4	21.7	11.5	9.3
	2022	4.4	6.6	12.9	27.6	21.0	17.6	10.0
	2021	2.9	10.7	14.3	28.9	19.0	15.6	8.6
Australia should not do business with China because of their domestic censorship of media, internet and other forms of communication	2024	3.0	10.6	15.0	31.4	21.1	12.2	6.7
	2023	2.9	7.9	16.8	30.8	19.9	12.7	9.0
	2022	2.6	8.2	9.9	23.7	29.9	14.0	11.8
	2021	2.4	11.6	16.1	27.8	23.3	11.8	7.1
Australia should not do business with China because of their record on environmental practices	2024	4.2	13.0	15.7	36.6	16.1	8.6	5.7
	2023	5.5	11.9	18.2	32.2	16.0	8.3	7.9
	2022	3.4	10.0	16.1	34.5	20.9	9.2	5.8
	2021	5.0	13.7	16.8	32.6	18.3	6.2	7.3

Society

Table 64A Impact of political tensions on the Australian-Chinese community (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Political tensions in the Australia-China relationship are negatively impacting Australians of Chinese origin	2024	2.1	4.6	7.1	37.1	27.3	16.9	4.9
	2023	1.8	3.7	5.2	33.8	28.9	19.1	7.4
	2022	1.5	5.0	7.8	26.4	30.8	20.0	8.5
	2021	2.3	3.8	3.8	26.9	30.3	21.2	11.8

Table 65A Perceptions of Chinese government influence on the Australian-Chinese community (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australians of Chinese origin can be mobilised by the Chinese government to undermine Australia's interests and social cohesion	2024	2.3	8.1	10.7	35.9	23.8	12.1	7.1
	2023	4.5	9.6	12.6	30.3	20.9	14.8	7.3
	2022	4.9	8.5	13.6	30.9	21.3	12.7	8.1
	2021	6.4	12.7	10.7	30.9	22.1	10.0	7.3

Table 66A Perceptions of the impact of Chinese government influence on Australian values and traditions (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australian values and traditions are being undermined by Chinese government influence in Australia	2024	2.8	8.6	9.8	33.1	22.1	15.6	8.0
	2023	3.9	10.1	11.1	26.9	20.0	19.0	9.1
	2022	3.5	8.5	14.2	25.8	20.0	17.2	10.8
	2021	3.6	10.9	11.5	28.4	19.2	15.7	10.6

Table 67A Support for the use of sanctions legislation (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia should place sanctions, such as travel and financial bans, on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights violations such as those committed in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong*	2024	1.2	4.1	5.0	21.3	26.3	24.3	17.8
	2023	2.6	2.6	6.1	20.4	21.7	24.0	22.7
	2022	2.6	2.9	5.4	24.0	26.5	20.1	18.5
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Note: The wording of this statement in 2022 and 2023 was 'Australia should place sanctions, such as travel and financial bans, on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights violations'. This was changed in 2024 to 'Australia should place sanctions, such as travel and financial bans, on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights violations such as those committed in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong'.

Table 68A China's willingness to arbitrarily detain Australian citizens (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
China is willing to detain/arrest Australian citizens without any legal basis to punish Australia over political disagreements	2024	2.7	3.6	6.3	23.4	22.2	20.7	21.0
	2023	4.2	5.5	4.5	24.5	22.9	17.7	20.6
	2022	2.8	4.4	5.1	22.5	25.9	20.9	18.4
	2021	3.4	3.4	3.4	22.3	21.6	25.2	20.8

Table 69A Arbitrary detention – A concern when considering travel to China? (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The risk of arbitrary detention is a concern when considering travel to China	2024	1.5	3.0	4.5	18.0	27.6	28.5	16.8
	2023	0.6	1.9	5.4	20.2	26.6	24.4	20.8
	2022	2.2	2.2	8.3	21.3	25.4	20.0	20.6
	2021	1.3	1.5	4.4	21.0	23.1	26.2	22.6

Table 70A Perceptions of international students' impact on people-to-people links (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
International students from China help strengthen the people-to-people links (e.g., family, friendships, business contacts, tourism) between the two countries	2024	4.1	5.9	4.7	32.3	31.1	18.2	3.8
	2023	3.8	5.1	7.3	28.8	25.6	22.0	7.3
	2022	6.2	4.9	4.9	29.6	28.0	17.7	8.6
	2021	3.6	6.7	9.3	22.7	30.7	21.8	5.3

Table 71A Perceptions of international students' impact on quality of education (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
International students from China are potentially reducing the quality of education at Australian universities	2024	4.1	13.1	15.2	32.4	14.0	12.8	8.5
	2023	5.4	13.7	13.0	33.0	13.3	15.2	6.3
	2022	4.9	15.4	15.8	31.6	15.4	10.1	6.9
	2021	9.6	14.2	16.9	19.6	14.6	10.5	14.6

Table 72A Perceptions of international students' impact on availability of university places (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
International students from China mean there are less places for domestic students to study in their choice of Australian university	2024	3.3	11.5	12.1	27.5	18.0	16.6	10.9
	2023	4.4	9.2	11.7	24.4	22.9	17.5	9.8
	2022	4.5	13.4	10.6	29.3	22.8	12.6	6.9
	2021	2.2	11.6	17.4	27.2	21.4	9.8	10.3

University and research

Table 73A Freedom of academic speech (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australian university ties with China compromise Australian freedom of speech	2024	2.9	3.8	13.7	34.3	24.1	14.0	7.3
	2023	2.5	7.0	9.6	32.2	22.6	16.2	9.9
	2022	2.8	7.3	14.2	25.6	24.8	17.1	8.1
	2021	2.7	8.0	12.9	28.1	21.0	13.4	13.8

Table 74A Research collaboration – General (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Academics from Australia should continue to partner with academics from China to undertake research projects	2024	3.8	2.6	5.0	34.4	32.1	17.8	4.4
	2023	3.5	1.9	7.0	26.8	27.4	27.7	5.7
	2022	2.4	4.9	7.3	24.7	32.4	20.2	8.1
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Research collaborations between academics from Australia and China makes Australia more competitive internationally	2024	2.6	3.8	7.6	37.5	27.3	16.1	5.0
	2023	1.3	6.0	6.7	34.6	28.6	19.7	3.2
	2022	3.3	4.5	4.5	38.9	27.0	20.1	1.6
	2021	2.6	5.3	7.5	36.6	27.8	15.9	4.4

Table 75A **Research collaboration – Science (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
It is beneficial for Australian scientists to have research connections to China	2024	2.4	3.2	3.4	24.9	31.5	26.5	8.0
	2023	1.4	4.3	5.7	21.0	31.0	26.3	10.4
	2022	2.8	5.0	6.5	22.5	30.1	21.9	11.3
	2021	3.5	3.5	6.9	17.9	27.5	30.2	10.4
Australian scientists working with Chinese scientists is beneficial for Australia	2024	2.6	2.2	6.4	26.9	27.9	23.2	10.8
	2023	1.9	3.5	5.1	24.8	26.1	26.1	12.5
	2022	3.7	3.3	3.5	20.3	34.5	26.2	8.5
	2021	3.3	6.0	5.8	20.4	28.3	27.1	9.0

Table 76A **Building closer relationships with Southeast Asian nations to counter China's influence (%)**

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
It is beneficial for Australia to build closer relationships with Southeast Asian nations, including through increased aid assistance, to counter China's influence in the region	2024	2.0	2.2	4.7	19.8	26.1	28.3	16.9
	2023	1.5	1.9	4.3	24.6	25.6	24.1	17.9
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 77A Building closer relationships with Pacific Island nations to counter China's influence (%)

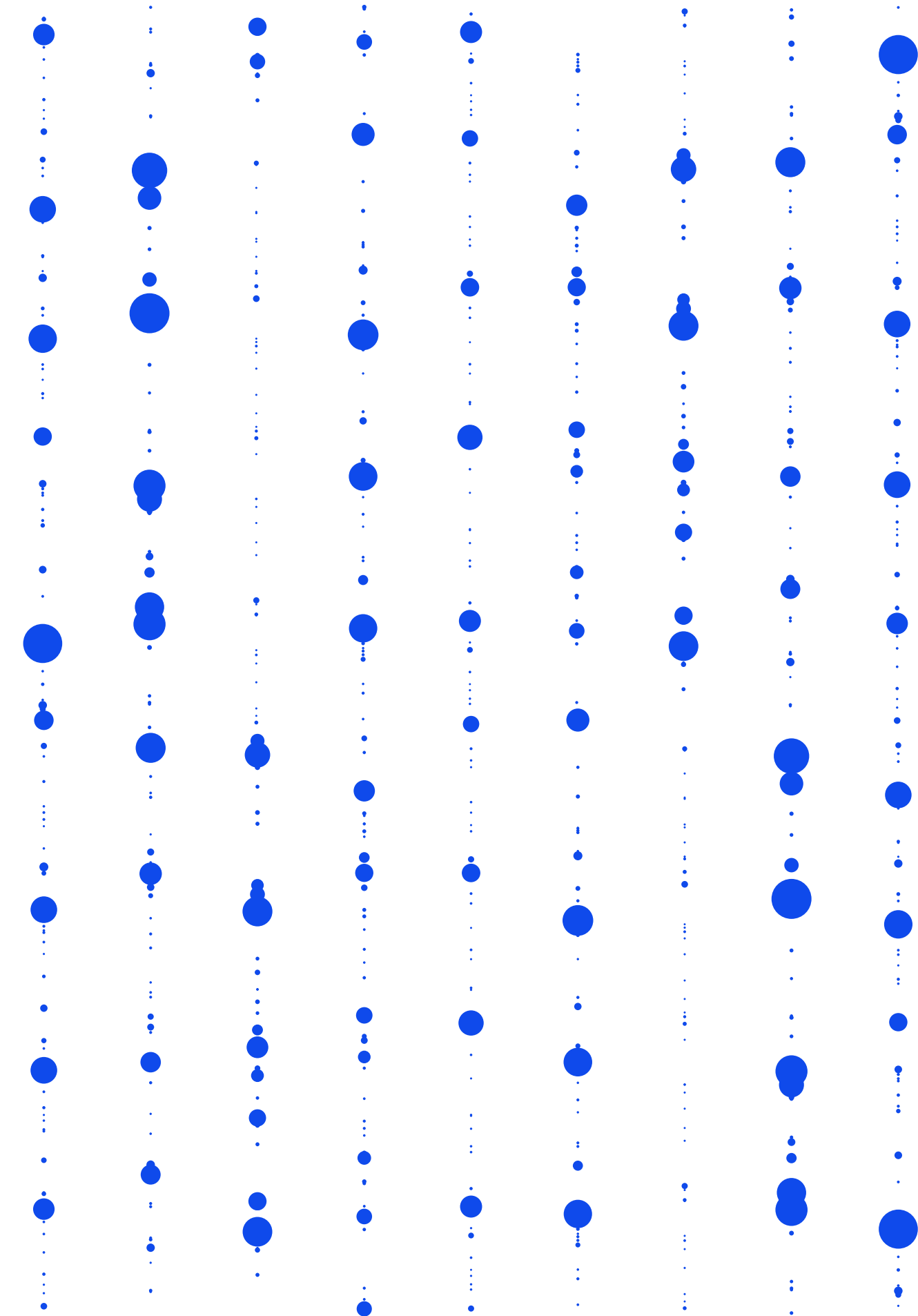
	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
It is beneficial for Australia to build closer relationships with Pacific Island nations, including through increased aid assistance, in order to counter China's influence in the region	2024	0.8	3.3	2.7	19.1	24.2	28.1	21.8
	2023	1.1	1.7	3.0	20.3	24.1	27.7	22.2
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 78A Benefits of global cooperation (%)

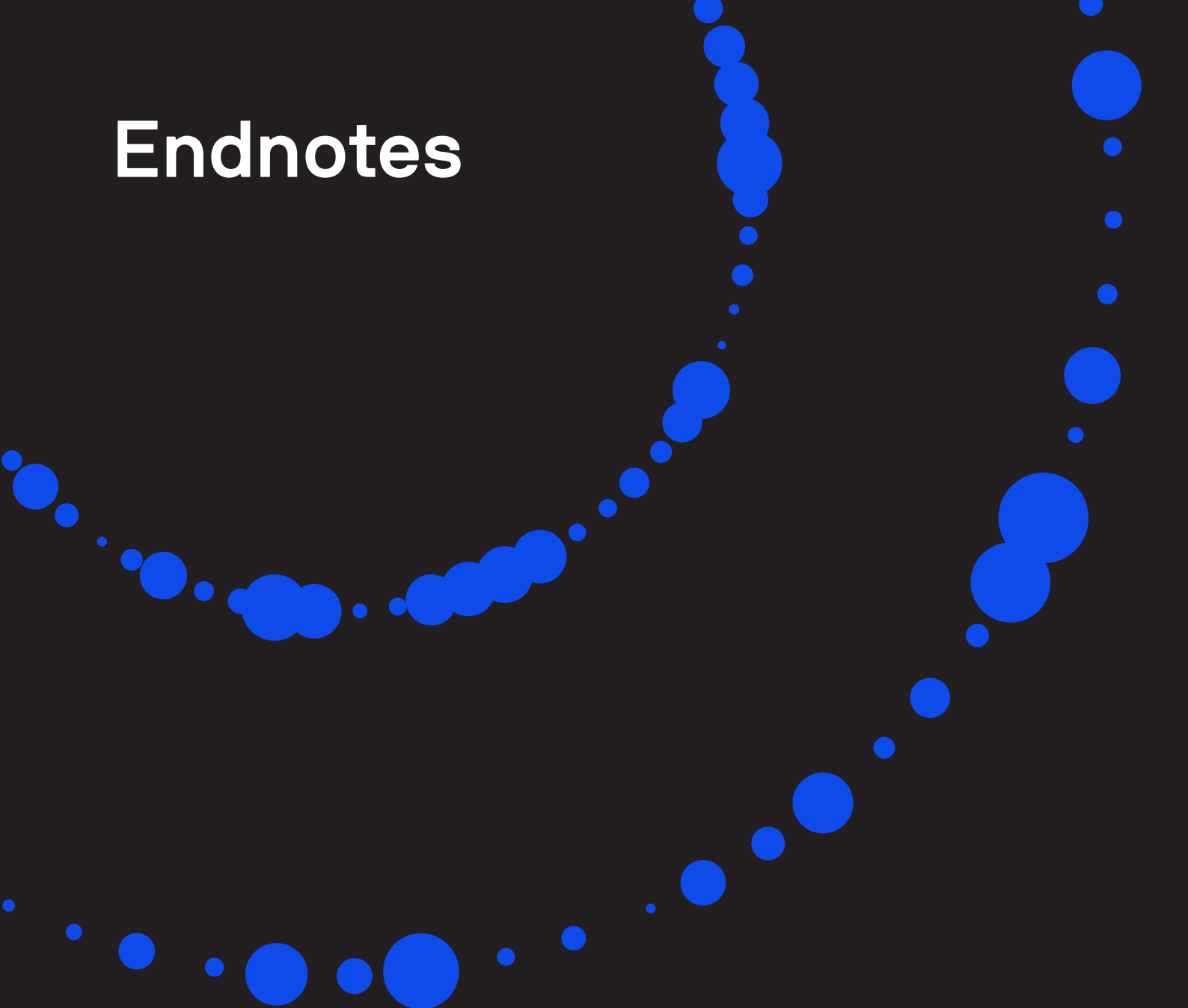
	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on global issues, such as climate change and global health	2024	3.4	3.0	3.2	20.0	28.3	27.5	14.6
	2023	2.5	2.9	4.9	17.8	22.9	31.1	18.0
	2022	3.0	3.5	4.8	19.5	23.2	31.5	14.5
	2021	3.1	4.4	2.7	15.8	28.7	29.1	16.2

Table 79A Benefits of regional cooperation (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on regional issues, such as ending malaria in the Pacific	2024	3.2	2.0	3.2	22.2	26.8	28.4	14.2
	2023	2.5	2.1	3.5	21.2	23.0	32.1	15.6
	2022	2.4	3.4	3.7	18.1	33.0	26.9	12.5
	2021	4.4	3.5	4.4	15.7	27.6	34.4	10.0



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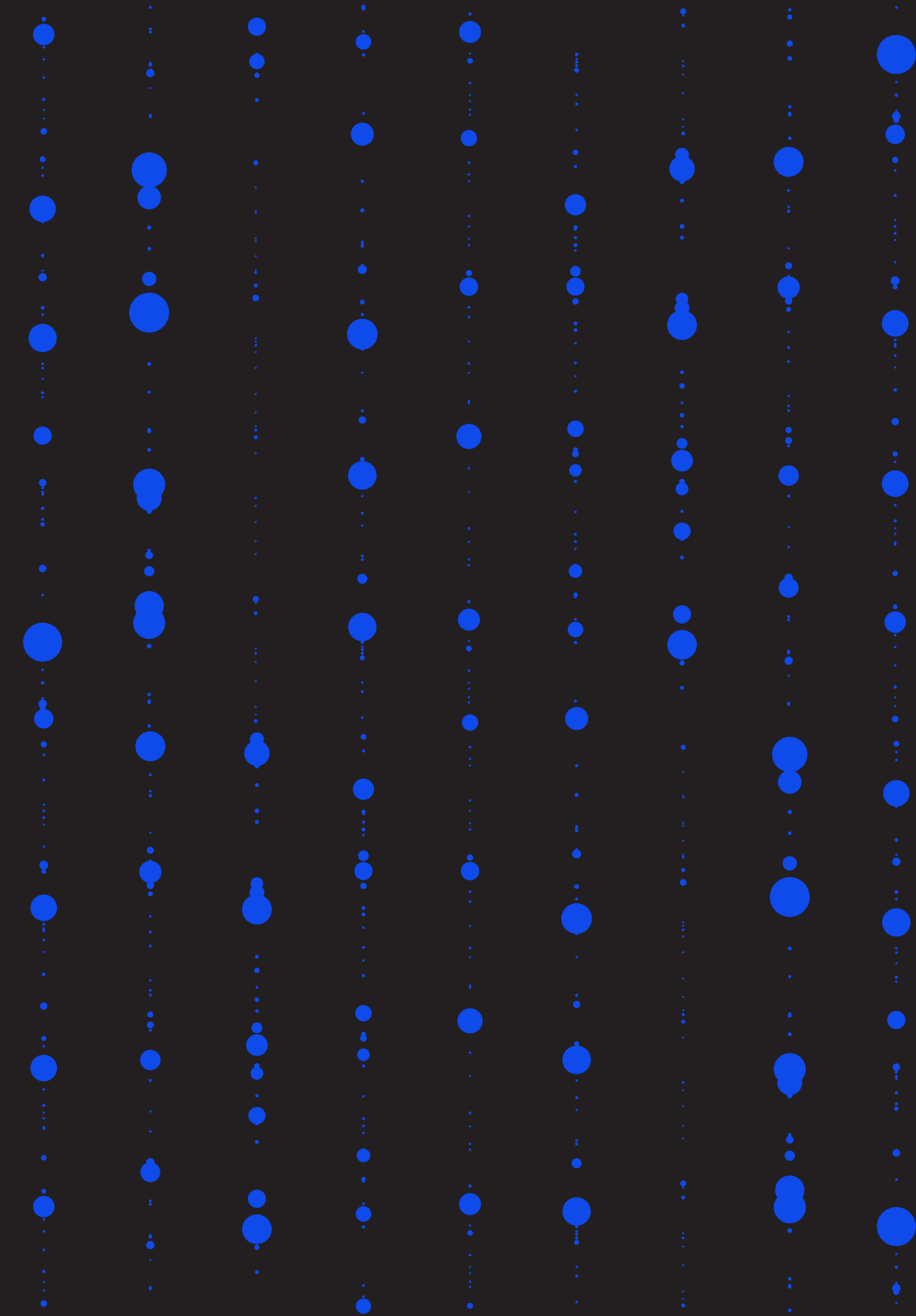
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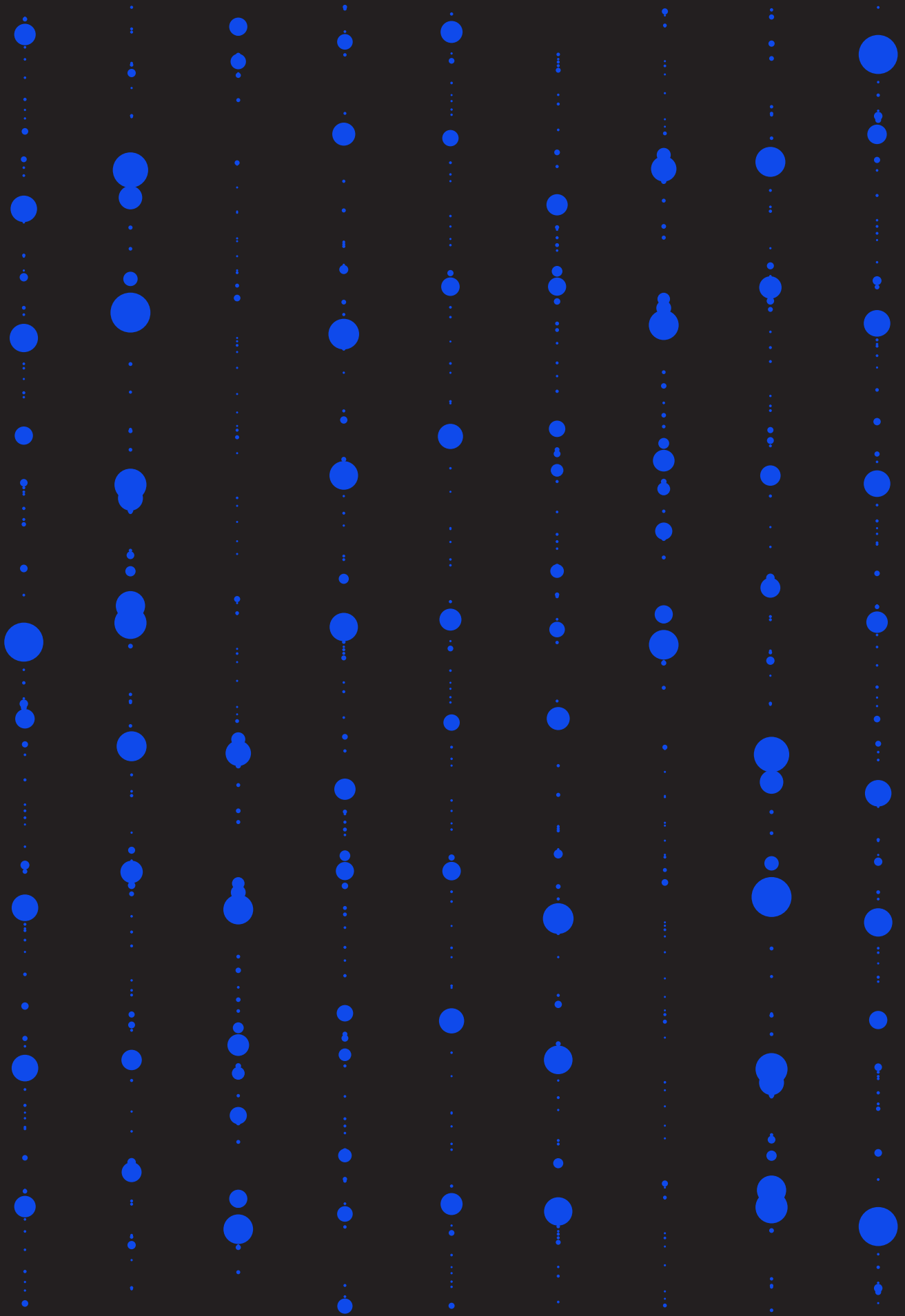
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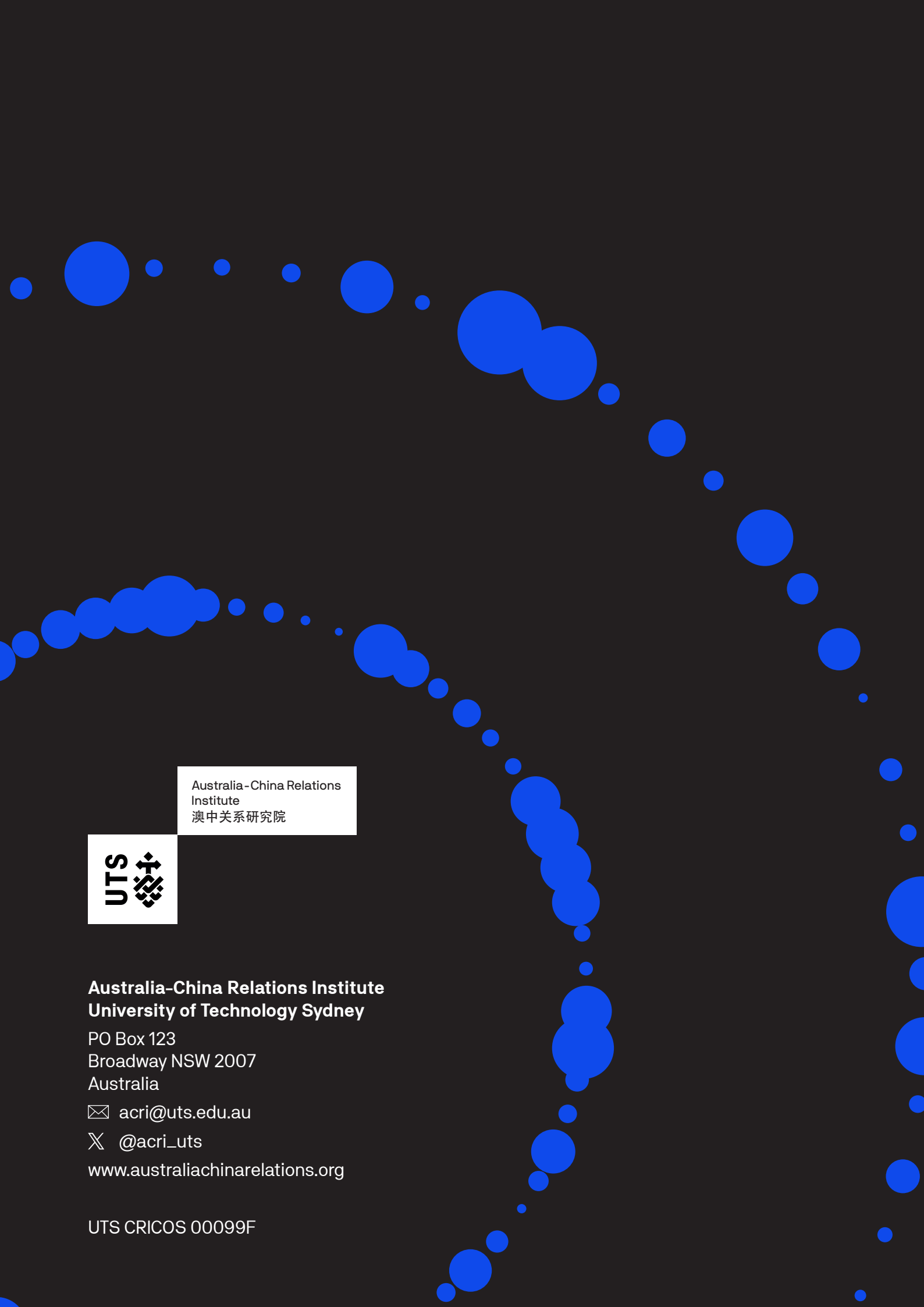
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