

Australia-China Relations
Institute
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UTS:ACRI/BIDA Poll 2023

The Australia-China
relationship: What do
Australians think?

Elena Collinson and Paul Burke

July 2023

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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australiachinarelations.org

✉ acri@uts.edu.au

🐦 [@acri_uts](https://twitter.com/acri_uts)

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Table of contents

Executive summary	6
Introduction	14
1. Overall views on the Australia-China relationship	17
1.1 Background	18
1.2 Building stronger connections and ties, a strong relationship	19
1.3 Concerns	22
1.4 Benefits	24
1.5 Mistrust of the Chinese government	26
1.6 The Australian government's management of China relations	28
1.7 A harder Australian government line on China	30
1.8 Responsibility for improving the Australia-China relationship	32
1.9 Future outlook	34
2. Politics and political communication	35
2.1 Background	36
2.2 Political party best placed to handle Australia's China policy	38
2.3 Management of China policy and impact on 2022 federal election vote	39
2.4 Communication over areas of disagreement	40
3. Military and security	41
3.1 Background	42
3.2 Security and stability	44
3.3 Conflict over Taiwan	50
3.4 Cybersecurity	53
3.5 The Belt and Road Initiative	67
3.6 The South China Sea	58
4. The United States	59
4.1 Background	60
4.2 Balancing Australia's relationships with the United States and China	61
4.3 Influence in the region	63
4.4 Economic punishment over political disagreements	64
5. Trade and investment	65
5.1 Background	66
5.2 The economic relationship overall	67
5.3 Trade agreements	73
5.4 Trade case study: Tourism	75
5.5 Trade case study: Education	76

5.6	Foreign investment	77
5.7	Investment case study: Port of Darwin	79
5.8	Investment case study: Critical minerals	80
5.9	Investment case study: Agriculture	81
5.10	Investment case study: Residential real estate	84
5.11	Business ties	88
6.	Society	91
6.1	Background	92
6.2	The Australian-Chinese community	93
6.3	Interference and influence	95
6.4	Sanctions legislation	100
6.5	Arbitrary detention	101
6.6	International students	102
7.	University and research	104
7.1	Background	105
7.2	Freedom of academic speech	106
7.3	Research collaborations	107
8.	Global and regional cooperation	109
8.1	Background	110
8.2	Global and regional cooperation	111
	Methodology	112
	Sample	113
	Instrument	113
	Analysis	113
	About	114
	About the authors	115
	About the Australia-China Relations Institute	116
	About the Centre for Business Intelligence & Data Analytics	117
	Acknowledgements	118
	Appendix	119
	Endnotes	150

Executive summary

Now in its third year, the *UTS:ACRI/BIDA Poll 2023* by the Australia–China Relations Institute and the Centre for Business Intelligence & Data Analytics at the University of Technology Sydney takes the Australian public’s pulse on prominent aspects of, and recent events pertinent to, the Australia–China relationship. Through so doing it hopes to build a better understanding of the relationship’s immediate past as well as the trends which may shape its future.

It examines how views have changed over the years since the inaugural 2021 poll. It also tracks opinions in relation to five demographic areas: age groups, state/territory of residence, education, geographical location (urban or rural) and which political party the respondent nominated as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy.

This year’s results reflect the view that the Australia–China relationship has made progress towards stabilisation, but aspirations for the future of the relationship continue to lie alongside apprehension and anxiety.

Four key themes appear to emerge from this year’s results.

The pragmatic thread in Australia–China relations endures but it continues to find itself under strain.

The fundamental desire for a strong relationship with China remains despite persistently high levels of mistrust in Australia towards the Chinese government, ongoing and acute fears that Beijing poses a security threat to Australia, and majority support, although decreasing over the years, for a tougher government line towards the PRC. Moreover, Australians have expressed a clear preference for strengthening the bilateral relationship and continue to identify its benefits, particularly in tourism and higher education. There is a certain optimism, too, that the relationship will continue to improve, with responsibility for improvement lying with both nations, although many still believe the onus to make that happen remains with China.

The Albanese Labor government’s policy of ‘stabilising’ the relationship with Beijing appears to be aligned with public sentiments. The Australian Labor Party is gaining domestic political advantage from being seen as the better party to manage the relationship, and statecraft is perceived as preferable to megaphone diplomacy in terms of how the relationship is conducted in public. At the same time, there is no real groundswell of support for much movement in the relationship beyond stabilisation. The poll results revealed only lukewarm support for China’s membership of the Comprehensive and Progressive

Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), continued encouragement for Australian businesses and companies to diversify their trade, ongoing deep suspicion of Chinese foreign investment, and a belief that the Chinese company Landbridge should be compelled to sell the Port of Darwin back to the government.

Australians continue to approach the regional environment with a mixture of apprehension and ambivalence.

Many see China as a threat, feel anxious about its intentions and military build-up, especially in the South China Sea, and believe war is possible within three years. At the same time, half of those polled believe a stable Australia–China relationship is a net positive for achieving what Foreign Minister Penny Wong has called a ‘regional strategic equilibrium’. The poll results also suggest Australians are still thinking about who carries the most influence in the region. Australians do worry, however, that the choice they have long wished to avert – that between its largest trading partner and its closest ally – may well be coming. Most believe that it will be Beijing that forces Australia’s hand, but an increasing proportion believe it will be Washington. Just over half of the respondents said that if America is engaged in a war with China over Taiwan, Australia will be there. But 49 percent advocate neutrality. It suggests that an Australian government could not count on blanket popular support in the event of making the decision to join a US-led war with China over Taiwan. And Australians are still thinking about the decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS (Australia–United Kingdom–United States) security partnership, with opinions divided as to whether the plan will help keep Australia secure from military threat from China – 44 percent agree and 33 percent disagree.

The residual fears and concerns about China continue to permeate public opinion.

Such concerns took deeper root in the Australian psyche at the height of the downturn in bilateral relations from 2017–2022. These are clearly reflected in the poll findings which show ongoing reservations about Australian business ties with China – concerns that many respondents linked to China’s human rights record. There is anxiety, too, that the Australia–Chinese community could be mobilised to serve Beijing’s ends; that foreign interference remains a live issue. Many Australians believe that the Australian government should sanction those Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights abuses; that Chinese social media platforms such as TikTok and WeChat should be banned; and that Chinese ownership of Australian

agricultural assets and residential real estate remain problematic. Some of those polled still judge Australia to be too economically reliant on China. However, most continue to believe that the relationship offers more economic opportunities than risks.

1. Overall views on the Australia-China relationship

Support for building stronger connections and ties, 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 represents a continuation of sentiment from 2022 (60 percent) and 2021 (61 percent).

Concerns: Concerns about the relationship still remain high, with sixty-seven percent of Australians expressing concerns about Australia's relationship with China. However, this sentiment reflects a six-point decrease from 2022 (73 percent) and a seven-point decrease from 2021 (74 percent).

Benefits: The number of Australians who also see the benefits of Australia's relationship with China is at a three-year poll high (63 percent). This is a five-point increase from 2022 (58 percent) and slightly higher than the sentiment expressed in 2021 (62 percent).

Mistrust of the Chinese government: The majority of Australians (70 percent) express mistrust of the Chinese government. This sentiment, while remaining high, has slowly declined over the past three years, down three points from 2022 (73 percent) and six points from 2021 (76 percent).

The Australian government's management of China relations: There has been a small uptick in Australians' perceptions of the Australian government's performance with respect to China relations. About two-fifths of Australians (39 percent) say that the Australian government is managing Australia's relationship with China well, a five-point increase from 2022 (34 percent).

A harder Australian government line on China:

Fifty-five percent of Australians support the Australian government adopting a harder line in its dealings with China, a steady decrease from 2022 (58 percent) and 2021 (63 percent).

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

Of the two, more Australians believe that the responsibility lies with China (46 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 largely pessimistic, this year a slightly higher percentage of Australians (32 percent) say they believe bilateral relations 'will improve in the next three years', a four-point increase from 2022 (28 percent) and five-point increase from 2021 (27 percent).

2. Politics and political communication

Political party best placed to handle Australia's China policy: The near-majority of respondents nominated the Australian Labor Party (49 percent) as the political party best placed to handle Australia's China policy, a 14-point increase from 2022 (35 percent).

Twenty-nine percent of Australians say the Liberal/National coalition are best placed to handle Australia's China policy, a seven-point decrease from 2022 (36 percent).

Australia's China policy – Impact on voting behaviour: Just over a quarter of Australians (27 percent) say that the Morrison-led government's management of China policy had an impact on their vote in the 2022 federal election. The majority of

Australians (56 percent) say that the issue did not have an impact.

A vocal stance? About six in 10 Australians (59 percent) say that ‘The Australian government’s disputes with the Chinese government are better communicated through diplomatic channels rather than public statements’, a four-point decrease from 2022 (63 percent).

3. Military and security

China as a security threat: Nearly three-quarters of Australians (72 percent) say that ‘China is a security threat to Australia’, a general continuation of views from 2022 (73 percent), which increased from 67 percent in 2021.

The possibility of military conflict with China within three years: Just over half of Australians (51 percent) say that ‘Military conflict with China within three years is a serious possibility’. Twenty-four percent disagree and 25 percent express neutrality.

Australians who nominate the Liberal/National coalition (71 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are significantly more likely to agree with this statement.

Support for an increase in Australia’s defence spending: Sixty-seven percent of Australians say that ‘The Australian government is right to increase defence spending, to balance, among other considerations, China’s growing military might’. This represents a three-point decrease from 2022 (70 percent).

Older Australians aged 55+ (84 percent) and Australians who nominate the Liberal/National coalition (87 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are significantly more likely to agree, while younger Australians aged 18–34 (45 percent) are significantly less likely to agree.

However, when asked whether the Australian government is right to increase defence spending ‘even if it means budget cuts in other areas’, support dropped 17 points, with half of Australians (50 percent) agreeing.

Acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS: Just over four in 10 Australians (44 percent) say 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.’ Thirty-three percent disagree and 23 percent express neutrality.

Forming trade and security blocs that exclude China: Four in 10 Australians (40 percent) say that ‘Australia should form trade and security blocs with other countries that deliberately exclude China’, a slight decrease from 2022 (41 percent) and 2021 (43 percent).

Regional stability and security: Just over half of Australians (51 percent) say that ‘Australia’s relationship with China contributes to regional stability and security’, a general continuation of views in 2022 (50 percent) and 2021 (52 percent).

Conflict over Taiwan: Australians remain fairly evenly split since last year between agreeing and disagreeing with the statement ‘If China launches a military attack on Taiwan, Australia should send troops to go to Taiwan’s defence.’ Thirty-seven percent of Australians agree, a two-point decrease from 2022 (39 percent). Twenty-eight percent express neutrality and 36 percent disagree, a two-point increase from 2022 (34 percent).

When American involvement was added to the scenario, respondents were more inclined to agree. Just over half of Australians (52 percent) say 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 four-point decrease from 2022 (56 percent) but still up from the low of 2021 (45 percent). Forty-nine percent of Australians say that in this scenario ‘Australia should remain neutral’.

Northern Territory residents (85 percent) are significantly more likely to support Australian neutrality in the event of conflict between the United States and China over Taiwan.

Country-wide TikTok and WeChat ban: The majority of Australians (61 percent) now say ‘Australia should

ban Chinese-owned apps such as TikTok and WeChat', up 14 points from 2022 (47 percent).

Older Australians aged 55+ (75 percent) are significantly more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (44 percent) are significantly less likely to agree.

Ban on TikTok on government devices: About three-quarters (76 percent) of Australians are supportive of the Australian government's recent moves to ban TikTok on devices used by Australian government employees.

Removal of Chinese-made surveillance equipment from Australian government buildings: The overwhelming majority of Australians (79 percent) support the Australian government's decision to remove Chinese-made surveillance equipment from Australian government buildings.

The Belt and Road Initiative: Just over half of Australians (54 percent) say that 'The Australian government is right not to sign up to/participate in China's Belt and Road Initiative', a three-point decrease from 2022 (57 percent) and a rough return to 2021 levels of agreement (53 percent).

The South China Sea: Australians' threat assessment of China's artificial island-building in the South China Sea is steadily increasing, with 70 percent saying it is a threat to Australia's security, up six points from 2022 (64 percent) and up 11 points from 2021 (59 percent).

4. The United States

Balancing act: About six in ten Australians (61 percent) say that 'Australia can enjoy a good relationship with both China and the United States at the same time'. Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (71 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are significantly more likely to agree. About a third of Australians (34 percent) say that 'Australia's relationship with China weakens our alliance with the United States.'

However, the belief is growing among Australians that either the United States or China will eventually

force Australia to choose between them. Forty-seven percent say the United States will force that choice, a five-point increase from 2022 (42 percent) and an eight-point increase from 2021 (39 percent). Fifty percent say such a choice will be forced by China, a four-point increase from views expressed in 2022 (46 percent) and a return to levels of agreement in 2021 (51 percent).

Influence in the region: Over the last three years, Australians have become progressively less convinced that 'China has more influence than the United States in Australia's regional neighbourhood'. Just over half of Australians (56 percent) agreed with the statement this year, a five-point decrease from 2022 (61 percent) and a nine-point decrease from 2021 (65 percent).

5. Trade and investment

The economic relationship overall: About seven in 10 Australians (72 percent) say that 'Australia is too economically reliant on China', reflecting a steady decrease from 2022 (74 percent) and 2021 (80 percent). In parallel, there has also been a steady decrease in agreement with the statement that the Australia-China economic relationship is 'more of an economic risk than an economic opportunity', with 47 percent of Australians in agreement this year, down four points from 2022 (51 percent) and down six points from 2021 (53 percent).

Australians are also slightly more confident (44 percent) that 'The Australian government has been successful in efforts to diversify trade, reducing Australia's economic exposure to China', up from 42 percent in 2022.

There has been also been a steady decrease over the years in agreement with the statement that 'Without close economic engagement with China, Australia would not be as prosperous as it currently is'. Fifty-seven percent of Australians agree, down three points from 2022 (60 percent) and down six points from 2021 (63 percent). Australian Capital Territory residents (73 percent) are significantly more likely to agree that Australia's prosperity is closely linked with

economic engagement with China compared with residents in other states and territories.

About six in 10 Australians (63 percent) note that 'Trade with China has created job opportunities in Australia'. However, Australians are less likely (47 percent) to say that 'The Australian government needs to be supportive of having closer economic ties with China' compared with 2022 (51 percent).

China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA): Just over half of Australians (55 percent) believe that ChAFTA has been 'beneficial for Australia'. Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (63 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are significantly more likely to agree.

The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP): Australians remain lukewarm about supporting China's bid to join the agreement, with just over a third of Australians (35 percent) agreeing that 'The Australian government should support China's bid to join' the CPTPP, a four-point increase from 2022 (31 percent). Australians still express stronger support for Taiwan's bid, with about six in 10 Australians (62 percent) saying 'The Australian government should support Taiwan's bid to join' the CPTPP, although this represents a four-point decrease from 2022 (66 percent).

Australians who nominate the Liberal/National coalition (77 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are significantly more likely to support Taiwan's CPTPP bid.

Trade case study – Tourism: Against the backdrop of world borders opening up again following the COVID-19 pandemic, just over seven in 10 Australians (72 percent) say 'Tourists from China provide a major economic benefit to Australia', a general continuation of views from 2022 (70 percent) and 2021 (74 percent).

Just over six in 10 Australians (62 percent) say that 'Australia should continue to work towards making Australia an attractive destination for Chinese tourists', a continuation of views from 2022 (62 percent) and 2021 (63 percent). Australian Capital Territory residents (79 percent) are significantly more likely to agree with this statement.

About half of Australians (51 percent) say that 'Encouraging tourism from China needs to be a post-COVID-19 priority for Australia'.

Trade case study – Education: Sixty-nine percent of Australians say that 'International students from China provide a major economic benefit to Australia'. At the same time, more than three-quarters of Australians (77 percent) believe that 'Australian universities are too financially reliant on international students from China'.

Forty-five percent of Australians say that 'Encouraging international students from China to return to study in Australia needs to be a post-COVID-19 priority for Australia'.

Foreign investment: About half of Australians (49 percent) say that 'Foreign investment from China has created job opportunities in Australia', down four points from 2022 (53 percent). However, general support for foreign investment from China remains fairly low, with just over half of Australians (51 percent) saying that 'Foreign investment from China is more detrimental than beneficial to Australia'. Western Australia residents (33 percent) are significantly less likely to agree with the latter statement compared with residents in other states and territories.

Investment case study – Port of Darwin: Australians are increasingly concerned about the ownership of the Port of Darwin. About two-thirds of Australians (64 percent) say that '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', a four-point increase from 2022 (60 percent).

Investment case study – Critical minerals: When presented with the broad statement, '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', 58 percent of Australians expressed agreement. However, when the statement was narrowed to 'The Australian government should limit foreign investment from China in Australia's critical minerals industry', nearly three-quarters of Australians (73 percent) expressed agreement.

Investment case study – Agriculture: The 2023 survey saw a repeat of the fairly high levels of concern about Chinese ownership of agricultural assets expressed in 2022 and 2021.

Only thirty-two percent of Australians say that ‘Chinese investment in agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia is more beneficial than detrimental to Australia’s interests’. On the other hand, two-thirds of Australians (66 percent) believe that ‘Chinese ownership of agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia is more concerning than ownership by companies from other countries’. Queensland residents (77 percent) are significantly more likely to agree with the latter statement.

Moreover, nearly seven in 10 Australians (68 percent) say that ‘Chinese ownership of agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia presents a threat to Australia’s food security’.

Investment case study – Residential real estate: Australians also continue to express strong concerns about Chinese investment in Australian residential real estate.

Only 29 percent of Australians say that ‘Chinese investment in Australian residential real estate brings a lot of benefits for Australians (e.g., construction, new dwellings, jobs)’, down four points from 2022 (33 percent) and 2021 (33 percent).

Less Australians (73 percent) say that ‘Foreign buyers from China drive up Australian housing prices’ compared with 2022 (79 percent) and 2021 (82 percent). However, the belief that ‘Australia should restrict the amount of investment in residential real estate that is permitted from Chinese investors’ remains steady, with nearly eight in 10 Australians (78 percent) agreeing, continuing on from 2022 (80 percent) and 2021 (78 percent).

Nearly seven in 10 Australians (68 percent) say that ‘Chinese investors have negatively affected the rental market for residential real estate in Australia’. New South Wales residents (84 percent) are significantly more likely to agree with this statement compared with residents in other states and territories.

Business ties: Australians remain generally supportive of maintaining business ties with China. Just over six in 10 Australians (63 percent) say ‘Australian companies should continue to pursue business opportunities with China’.

But Australians also express reservations stemming from the Chinese government’s domestic policies, although some of these reservations have decreased slightly this year. Australians say that Australia should not do business with China because of its ‘record on human rights’ (43 percent, down six points from 49 percent in 2022); ‘domestic censorship of media, internet and other forms of communication’ (42 percent, the same level as in 2022 and 2021); and ‘record on environmental practices’ (32 percent, down four points from 36 percent in 2022).

6. Society

The Australian-Chinese community: Fifty-six percent of Australians say that ‘Political tensions in the Australia-China relationship are negatively impacting Australians of Chinese origin’, a steady decrease from 2022 (59 percent) and 2021 (63 percent).

Forty-three percent of Australians say that ‘Australians of Chinese origin can be mobilised by the Chinese government to undermine Australia’s interests and social cohesion’, a slight increase from 2022 (42 percent) and 2021 (39 percent). Australians who nominate the Liberal/National coalition (56 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are significantly more likely to agree with this statement.

Interference and influence: Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of Australians say that ‘Foreign interference in Australia stemming from China is more concerning than foreign interference from other countries’, down three points from 2022 (67 percent).

Sixty-four percent of Australians also say that ‘Foreign interference in Australia stemming from China is a major problem’, down five points from 2022 (69 percent), but still higher than concerns about foreign interference stemming from Russia (62 percent) and the United States (43 percent), which

were used as country comparisons.

Support for sanctions legislation: Sixty-eight percent of Australians say that ‘Australia should place sanctions, such as travel and financial bans, on Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights violations’, up three points from 2022 (65 percent).

Arbitrary detention: More Australians (72 percent) now believe that ‘The risk of arbitrary detention is a concern when considering travel to China’, up six points from 2022 (66 percent).

About six in 10 Australians (61 percent) state that ‘China is willing to detain/arrest Australian citizens without any legal basis to punish Australia over political disagreements’. Australian Capital Territory residents (81 percent) are significantly more likely to agree compared with residents in other states and territories.

International students: Fifty-five percent of Australians say that ‘International students from China help strengthen the people-to-people links (e.g., family, friendships, business contacts, tourism) between the two countries’, a general continuation of views from 2022 (54 percent), but down from the 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’, a three-point increase from 2022 (32 percent) but still down from the high of 2021 (40 percent).

Half of Australians (50 percent) express the concern that ‘International students from China mean there are less places for domestic students to study in their choice of Australian university’, an eight-point increase from 2022 (42 percent) and 2021 (42 percent).

7. University and research

Freedom of academic speech: About half of Australians (49 percent) are concerned that ‘Australian university ties with China compromise

Australian freedom of speech’, a general continuation of views from 2022 (50 percent) and 2021 (48 percent).

Research collaboration – General: Australians have maintained a steady level of support for Australia-China university research collaboration, with about six in 10 Australians in 2023 (61 percent) and 2022 (61 percent) saying that ‘Academics from Australia should continue to partner with academics from China to undertake research projects’. Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (70 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are significantly more likely to agree with this statement.

Just over half of Australians (51 percent) also say that such research collaborations ‘makes Australia more competitive internationally’.

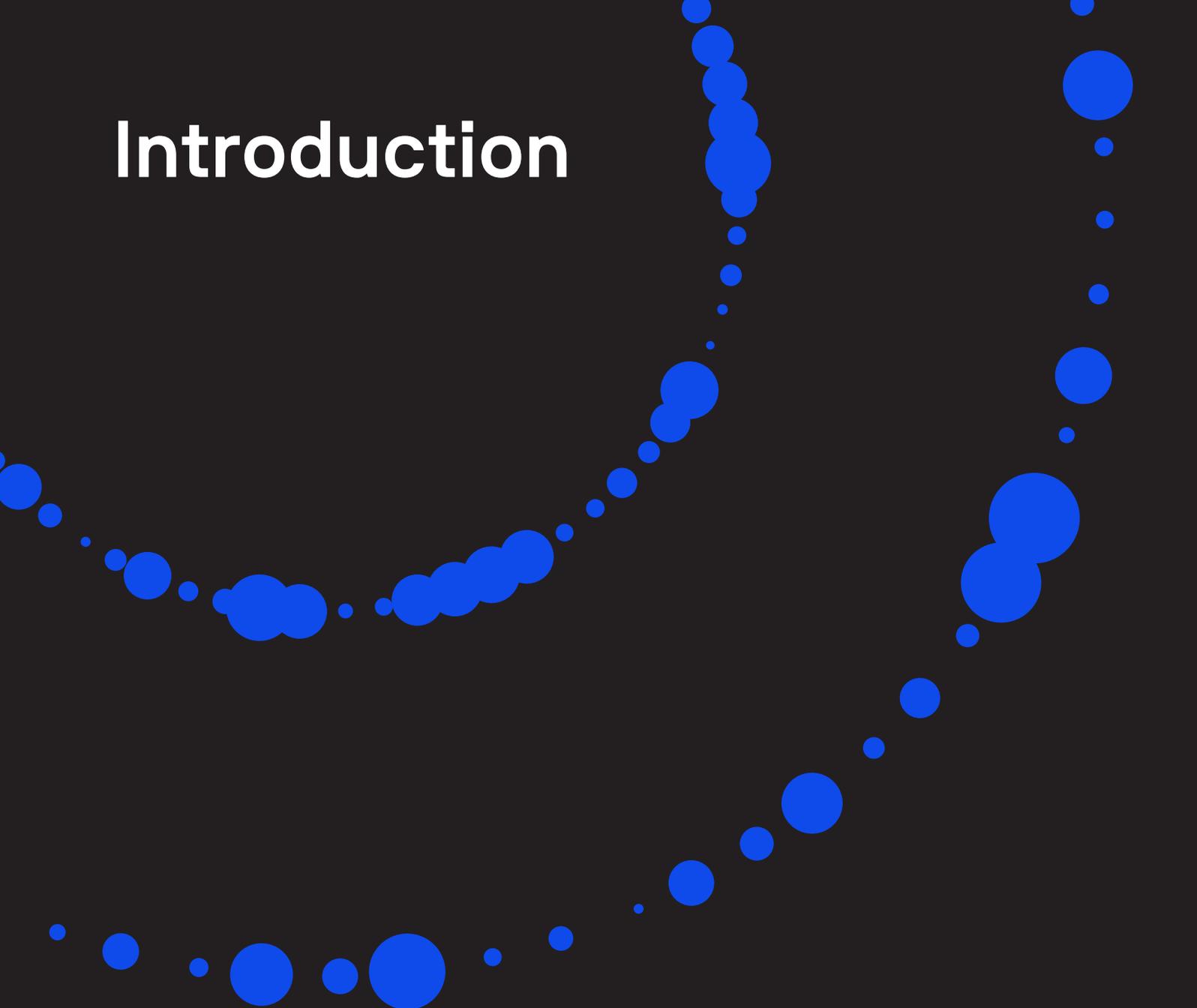
Research collaboration – Science: Just over two-thirds of Australians (68 percent) say that ‘It is beneficial for Australian scientists to have research connections to China’. This is nearly matched by the percentage of Australians (65 percent) who say that overall ‘Australian scientists working with Chinese scientists is beneficial for Australia’.

8. Global and regional cooperation

Even as Australians express a number of concerns regarding threats emanating from China, levels of support for Australia working cooperatively with China to tackle global and regional issues have remained high and fairly steady over the last three years. Just over seven in 10 Australians (72 percent) say that ‘It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on global issues, such as climate change and global health’, a general continuation of views from 2022 (69 percent) and 2021 (74 percent).

Just over seven in 10 Australians (71 percent) also say that ‘It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on regional issues, such as ending malaria in the Pacific’, a general continuation of views from 2022 (72 percent) and 2021 (72 percent).

Introduction



Now in its third year, the *UTS:ACRI/BIDA Poll 2023* by the Australia-China Relations Institute and the Centre for Business Intelligence & Data Analytics at the University of Technology Sydney takes the Australian public's pulse on prominent aspects of, and recent events pertinent to, the Australia-China relationship. Through so doing it hopes to build a better understanding of the relationship's immediate past as well as the trends which may shape its future.

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This year's results reflect the view that the Australia-China relationship has made progress towards stabilisation, but aspirations for the future of the relationship continue to lie alongside apprehension and anxiety.

Four key themes appear to emerge from this year's results.

The pragmatic thread in Australia-China relations endures but it continues to find itself under strain. The fundamental desire for a strong relationship with China remains despite persistently high levels of mistrust in Australia towards the Chinese government, ongoing and acute fears that Beijing poses a security threat to Australia, and majority support, although decreasing over the years, for a tougher government line towards the PRC. Moreover, Australians have expressed a clear preference for strengthening the bilateral relationship and continue to identify its benefits, particularly in tourism and higher education. There is a certain optimism, too, that the relationship will continue to improve, with responsibility for improvement lying with both nations, although many still believe the onus to make that happen remains with China.

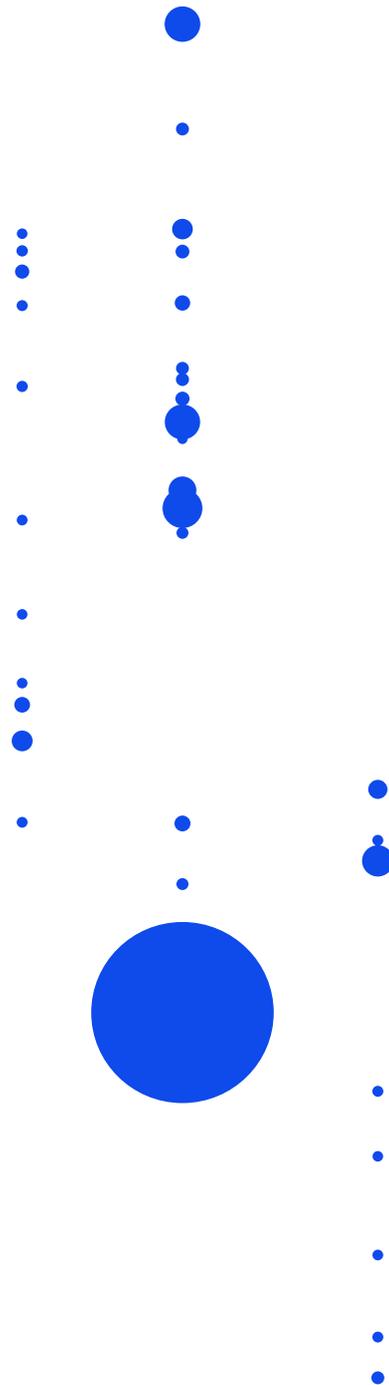
The Albanese Labor government's policy of 'stabilising' the relationship with Beijing appears to be aligned with public sentiments.

The Australian Labor Party is gaining domestic political advantage from being seen as the better party to manage the relationship, and statecraft is perceived as preferable to megaphone diplomacy in terms of how the relationship is conducted in public. At the same time, there is no real groundswell of support for much movement in the relationship beyond stabilisation. The poll results revealed only lukewarm support for China's membership of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), continued encouragement for Australian businesses and companies to diversify their trade, ongoing deep suspicion of Chinese foreign investment, and a belief that the Chinese company Landbridge should be compelled to sell the Port of Darwin back to the government.

Australians continue to approach the regional environment with a mixture of apprehension and ambivalence. Many see China as a threat, feel anxious about its intentions and military build-up, especially in the South China Sea, and believe war is possible within three years. At the same time, half of those polled believe a stable Australia-China relationship is a net positive for achieving what Foreign Minister Penny Wong has called a 'regional strategic equilibrium'. The poll results also suggest Australians are still thinking about who carries the most influence in the region. Australians do worry, however, that the choice they have long wished to avert – that between its largest trading partner and its closest ally – may well be coming. Most believe that it will be Beijing that forces Australia's hand, but an increasing proportion believe it will be Washington. Just over half of the respondents said that if America is engaged in a war with China over Taiwan, Australia will be there. But 49 percent advocate neutrality. It suggests that an Australian government could not count on blanket popular support in the event of making the decision to

join a US-led war with China over Taiwan. And Australians are still thinking about the decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS (Australia-United Kingdom-United States) security partnership, with opinions divided as to whether the plan will help keep Australia secure from military threat from China - 44 percent agree and 33 percent disagree.

The residual fears and concerns about China continue to permeate public opinion. Such concerns took deeper root in the Australian psyche at the height of the downturn in bilateral relations from 2017-2022. These are clearly reflected in the poll findings which show ongoing reservations about Australian business ties with China – concerns that many respondents linked to China’s human rights record. There is anxiety, too, that the Australia-Chinese community could be mobilised to serve Beijing’s ends; that foreign interference remains a live issue. Many Australians believe that the Australian government should sanction those Chinese officials and entities involved in human rights abuses; that Chinese social media platforms such as TikTok and WeChat should be banned; and that Chinese ownership of Australian agricultural assets and residential real estate remain problematic. Some of those polled still judge Australia to be too economically reliant on China. However, most continue to believe that the relationship offers more economic opportunities than risks.



1. Overall views on the Australia-China relationship



1.1 Background

The Australian Labor Party, voted in at the May 2022 federal election after a decade of Coalition governments, frames its approach to China through the formula ‘cooperate where we can, disagree where we must and engage in the national interest’.

It has toned down the narrative, amplified by the prior Coalition government, of China’s threats, and emphasises the importance of ‘stabilising’ the bilateral relationship.

China has stated that it ‘is ready to re-examine, re-calibrate, and reinvigorate bilateral ties’ after the turbulence of the last few years. Beijing – wilfully ignoring the complexities of Australia-China relations – levelled the totality of blame for tensions in the relationship to the Morrison government, stating it was ‘the root cause of... difficulties’ on account of being responsible for ‘a series of irresponsible words and deeds against China’.¹

High-level ministerial contact has since resumed. China’s campaign of economic coercion – associated with trade disruptions on commodities including coal, beef, copper, cotton, timber, citrus and stonefruits – is also starting to ease in some sectors, although significant trade barriers, including against barley, wine and live lobster, remain. The descriptor ‘comprehensive strategic partnership’ has also been revived in Australian and Chinese ministerial rhetoric.² It remains possible, moreover, that Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will visit China towards the end of this year, which will make him the first Australian prime minister to visit Beijing since Malcolm Turnbull in 2016.

These outcomes arguably reflect the assessment of the Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles that there has been an ‘important’ change in ‘tone and mood’ in the Australia-China relationship.³

However, while the tone has been modulated, the new Australian government has also emphasised ongoing challenges in the Australia-China relationship. It has also made it clear that renewed engagement would not extend to concessions.⁴

The Prime Minister effectively dismissed the notion of a wholesale ‘reset’ of the relationship towards the beginning of his term. In his first press conference after being sworn in as prime minister, Mr Albanese said the relationship with China would remain ‘a difficult one’.⁵ At the hundred day mark in office, he also nominated strategic competition with a ‘forward-leaning’ China as one of the three biggest challenges he felt he would face as prime minister. The Deputy Prime Minister similarly stressed it would be ‘a challenging pathway forward’,⁶ noting that China ‘seeks to shape the world around it in a way that we’ve not experienced before’ and that this ‘raises challenges’ for Australia.⁷ Foreign Minister Penny Wong, too, has stated that both countries have ‘a long path to walk’ and both countries ‘will have to choose to walk it’.⁸

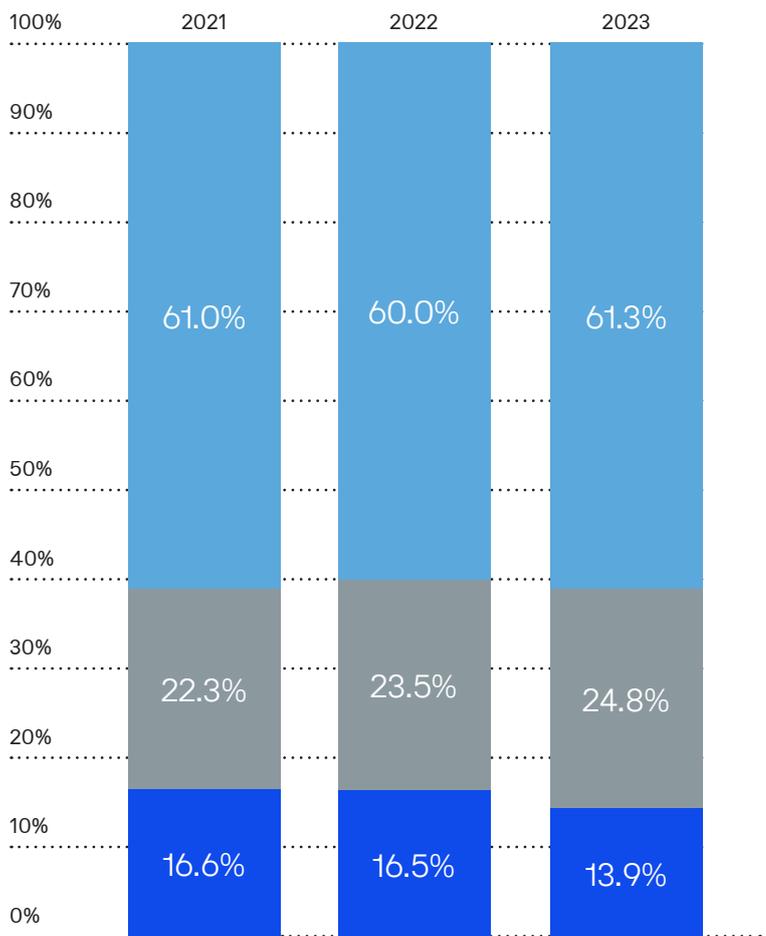
On this point, there has been little departure from the strategic fundamentals of the previous government, with the bedrock core of Australia’s China policy remaining the same. Given the fundamental challenges arising from China’s international posture, and concerns regarding its actions domestically, security and defence have been, and will likely continue to be, prominent themes in Australia’s discussions on China (see Section 3. Military and Security). In parallel, the Australian government has focused on strengthening Australia’s alliance with the United States, partnerships such as the Quad (with India, Japan and the United States) and AUKUS (with the United Kingdom and the United States), as well as its relations with Southeast Asian and Pacific Island nations.

The government and opposition are currently more or less united with respect to China policy – Opposition Leader Peter Dutton said that in his estimation the government had been ‘strong enough’ in ‘calling out China’s bad behaviour’,⁹ and has stated that comments from senior ministers ‘essentially echo’ the Coalition stance.¹⁰

1.2 Building stronger connections and ties, 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 from 2022 (60 percent) and 2021 (61 percent). Twenty-five percent express neutrality and 14 percent disagree (Figure 1).

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



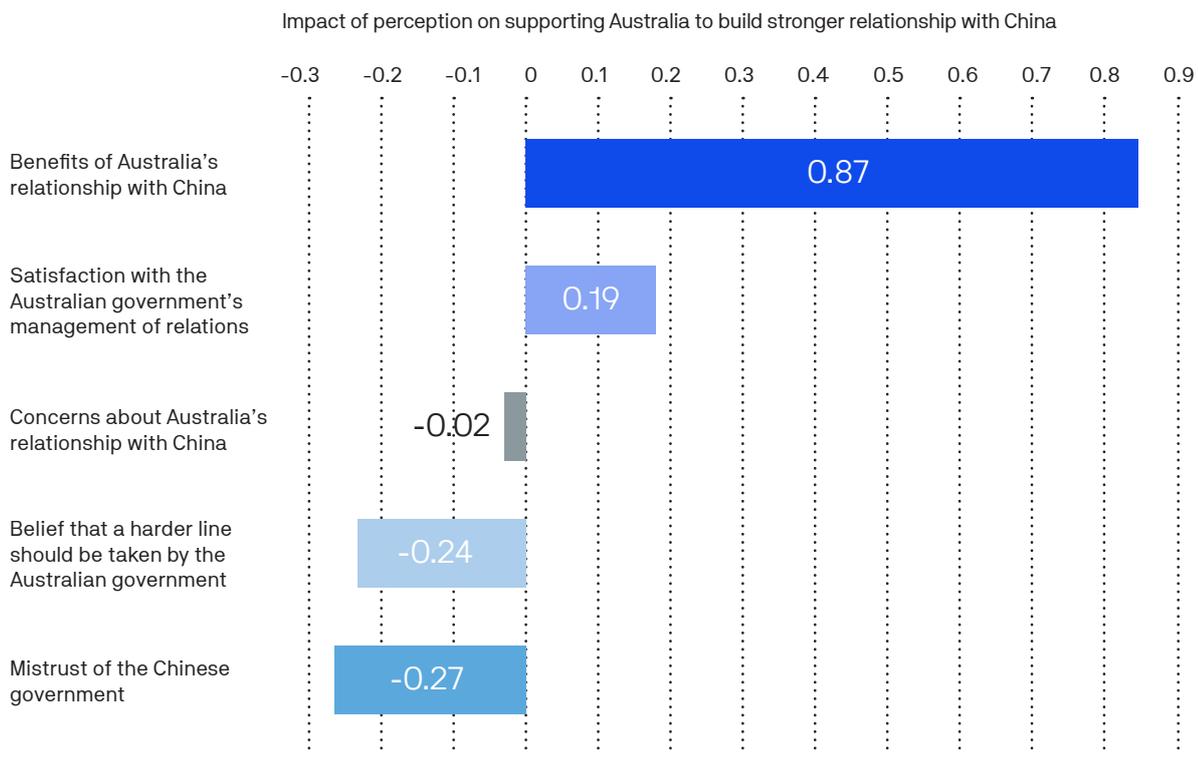
Australia should try to build strong connections with China

Australia should build strong ties with China

Australia should have a strong relationship with China

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

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



The biggest factor driving support for the sentiment was among survey respondents who perceived the benefits of the Australia-China relationship. To a lesser extent, the level of satisfaction with the Australian government's management of 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).

Those who expressed mistrust of the Chinese government and who tended towards agreeing 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. Impact of latent factors on support for building stronger connections and ties, having a strong relationship with China

	More supportive	Less supportive
State	-	New South Wales; Queensland
Age	-	-
Gender	Male	Female
Location (Urban/rural)	-	-
Household type	-	-
Education (highest level)	Bachelor's degree	-
Employment	Retired	Unemployed
Income	-	Median income (\$42,000-\$91,000 p.a.)
Political view	Left-wing	Right-wing
Political party best placed to manage China relations	Australian Labor Party	Liberal/National; Other minority party

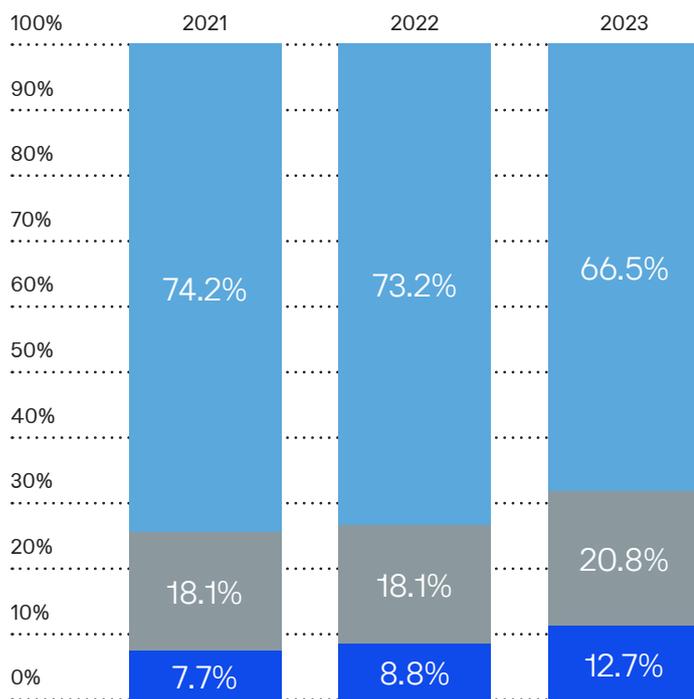
Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported their gender as male; completing a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education; their employment status as retired; their political views as left-wing; and nominating the Australian Labor Party as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 1).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported residing in New South Wales or Queensland; their gender as female; their employment status as unemployed; earning a median income of \$42,000-\$91,000 per annum; their political views as right-wing; and nominating the Liberal/Nationals or a minority party as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 1).

1.3 Concerns

Sixty-seven percent of Australians express concerns about Australia's relationship with China. This sentiment reflects a six-point decrease from 2022 (73 percent) and a seven-point decrease from 2021 (74 percent). Twenty-one percent express neutrality and 13 percent disagree (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Concerns about Australia's relationship with China



- I am concerned about Australia's relationship with China
- 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. Impact of latent factors on concerns about Australia's relationship with China

	More concerned	Less concerned
State	New South Wales	South Australia
Age	55+	18-34
Gender	Female	Male
Location (Urban/rural)	-	-
Household type	-	-
Education (highest level)	High school	Bachelor's degree
Employment	-	-
Income	Median to higher income (>\$42,000 p.a.)	Lower income (<\$41,600 p.a.)
Political view	Right-wing	Left-wing; Neutral
Political party best placed to manage China relations	Liberal/National	Australian Labor Party; Other minority party

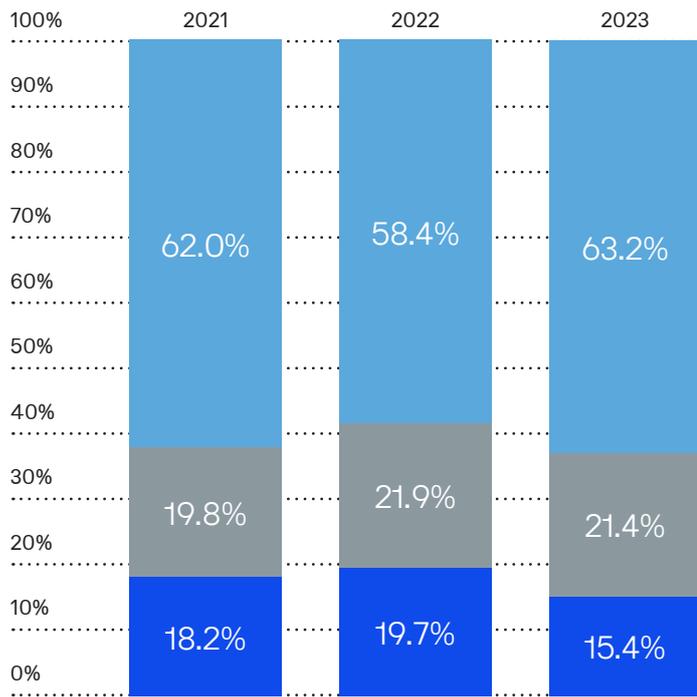
Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported residing in New South Wales; occupying an older age bracket (aged 55+); their gender as female; completing high school as their highest level of education; earning a median to higher income greater than \$42,000 per annum; their political views as right-wing; and nominating the Liberal/Nationals as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 2).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported residing in South Australia; occupying a younger age bracket (aged 18-34); their gender as male; completing a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education; earning a lower income of less than \$41,600 per annum; their political views as left-wing or neutral; and nominating the Australian Labor Party or a minority party as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 2).

1.4 Benefits

Sixty-three percent of Australians say they see the benefits of Australia’s relationship with China, a five-point increase from 2022 (58 percent), back on par with the sentiment expressed in 2021 (62 percent). Twenty-one percent express neutrality and 15 percent disagree (Figure 4).

Figure 4. **Benefits of Australia’s relationship with China**



It is very beneficial for Australia to have a working relationship with China

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

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. Impact of latent factors on the benefits of Australia’s relationship with China

	More beneficial	Less beneficial
State	-	-
Age	18-34	35-55
Gender	Male	Female
Location (Urban/rural)	-	-
Household type	Family	Other (single household; group household)
Education (highest level)	Bachelor’s degree	High school
Employment	Retired	-
Income	Higher income (>\$91,000 p.a.)	Median income (\$42,000-\$91,000 p.a.)
Political View	Left-wing	Right-wing; Neutral
Political party best placed to manage China relations	Australian Labor Party	Liberal/National; Other minority party

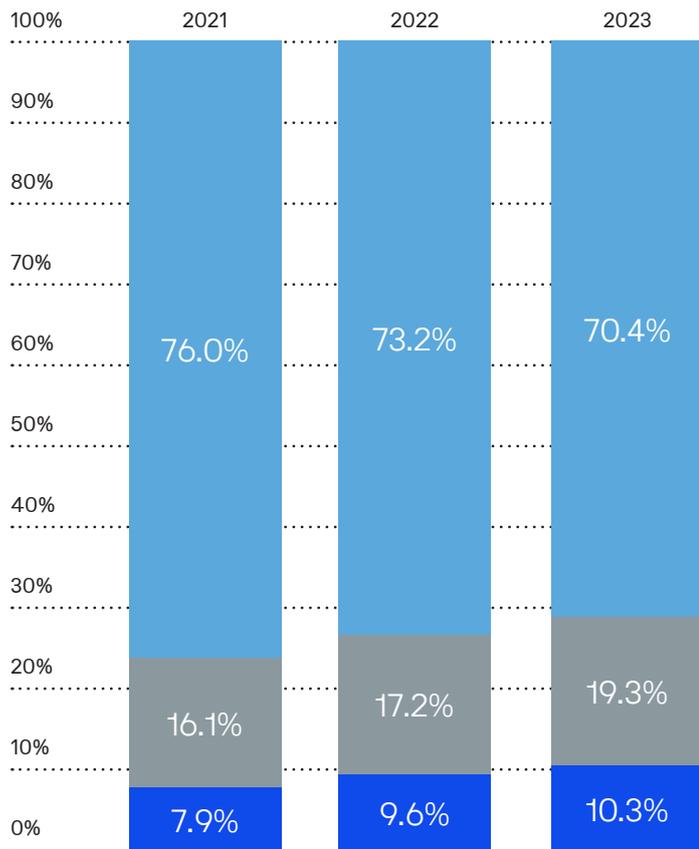
Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported occupying a younger age bracket (aged 18-34); their gender as male; living in a family household; completing a bachelor’s degree as their highest level of education; their employment status as retired; earning a higher income greater than \$91,000 per annum; their political views as left-wing; and nominating the Australian Labor Party as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 3).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported occupying the age bracket 35-55; their gender as female; living in a single household or group household; completing high school as their highest level of education; earning a median income of \$42,000-\$91,000 per annum; their political views as right-wing or neutral; and nominating the Liberal/Nationals or a minority party as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 3).

1.5 Mistrust of the Chinese government

Seven in 10 Australians (70 percent) express mistrust of the Chinese government. This sentiment has steadily declined over the past three years, down three points from 2022 (73 percent) and six points from 2021 (76 percent). Nineteen percent express neutrality and 10 percent disagree (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Mistrust of the Chinese government



- I have a lot of mistrust towards the Chinese government in its dealings with Australia
- 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. Impact of latent factors on mistrust of the Chinese government

	More mistrusting	Less mistrusting
State	-	Victoria
Age	55+	18-34
Gender	-	-
Location (Urban/rural)	-	-
Household type	-	-
Education (highest level)	-	Bachelor's degree
Employment	-	-
Income	-	-
Political view	Right-wing	Left-wing
Political party best placed to manage China relations	Liberal/National	Australian Labor Party; Other minority party

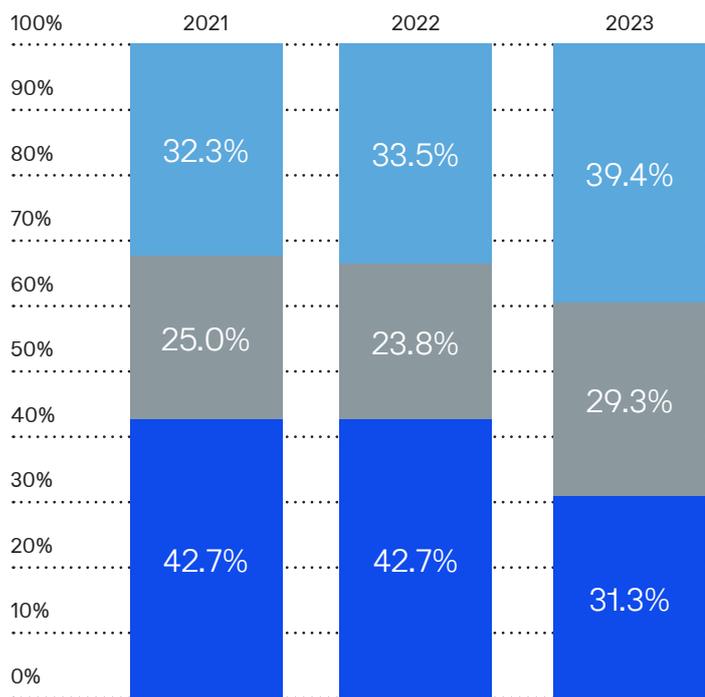
Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported occupying an older age bracket (aged 55+); their political views as right-wing; and nominating the Liberal/Nationals as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 4).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported residing in Victoria; occupying a younger age bracket (aged 18-34); completing a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education; their political views as left-wing; and nominating the Australian Labor Party or a minority party as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 4).

1.6 The Australian government's management of China relations

About two-fifths of Australians (39 percent) say that the Australian government is managing Australia's relationship with China well, a five-point increase from 2022 (34 percent) and a seven-point increase from 2021 (32 percent). Twenty-nine percent express neutrality and 31 percent disagree (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

Legend:
● Agree
● Neutral
● Disagree

Table 5. Impact of latent factors on satisfaction with the Australian government’s management of China relations

	More satisfied	Less satisfied
State	-	South Australia
Age	18-34	-
Gender	-	-
Location (Urban/rural)	Large metropolitan	Rural
Household type	Family	Other (single household; group household)
Education (highest level)	-	-
Employment	-	-
Income	-	Median income (\$42,000-\$91,000 p.a.)
Political view	-	-
Political party best placed to manage China relations	Australian Labor Party	Liberal/National; Other minority party

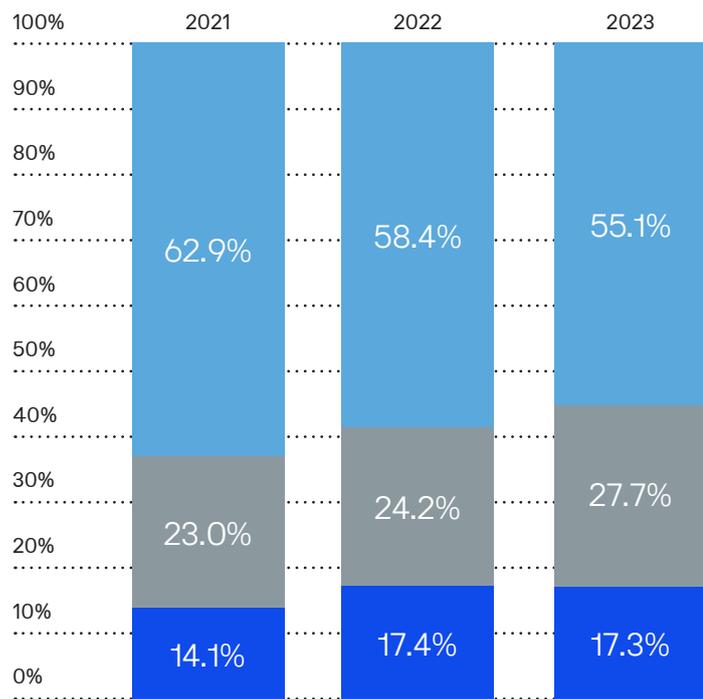
Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported occupying a younger age bracket (aged 18-34); residing in a large metropolitan area; living in a family household; and nominating the Australian Labor Party as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 5).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported residing in South Australia; residing in a rural area; living in a single household or group household; earning a median income of \$42,000-\$91,000 per annum; and nominating the Liberal/Nationals or a minority party as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 5).

1.7 A harder Australian government line on China

Fifty-five percent of Australians believe that the Australian government should take a harder line with respect to its policies dealing with China, a steady decrease from 2022 (58 percent) and 2021 (63 percent). Twenty-eight percent express neutrality and 17 percent disagree (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Support for a harder Australian government line on China



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

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

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

Table 6. Impact of latent factors on support for a harder Australian government line on China

	More supportive	Less supportive
State	-	Australian Capital Territory
Age	-	-
Gender	Female	Male
Location (Urban/rural)	-	-
Household type	-	-
Education (highest level)	High school; Certificate/ Trade/ Diploma	Bachelor's degree; Postgraduate degree
Employment	-	-
Income	-	-
Political view	Right-wing	Left-wing
Political party best placed to manage China relations	Liberal/National	Australian Labor Party; Other minority party

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses agreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported their gender as female; completing high school or a certificate/trade/diploma as their highest level of education; their political views as right-wing; and nominating the Liberal/Nationals as the political party best placed to manage China relations (Table 6).

Latent factors that had the most significant impact on responses disagreeing with the sentiment were respondents who reported residing in the Australian Capital Territory; their gender as male; completing a bachelor's degree or a postgraduate degree as their highest level of education; their political views as left-wing; and nominating the Australian Labor Party or a minority party as the political party best placed to manage China relations (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’

Seventy-eight percent of Australians agree, a continuation of views expressed in 2022 (78 percent) and 2021 (80 percent). Sixteen percent express neutrality and seven percent disagree (Figure 8).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (85 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 are less likely to agree (72 percent).

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents are more likely to agree (86 percent) and New South Wales residents are less likely to agree (70 percent).

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

Forty-six percent of Australians agree, a general continuation of views expressed in 2022 (45 percent), inching back to the high of 48 percent in 2021. Thirty-three percent express neutrality and 22 percent disagree (Figure 8).

A state/territory divide: New South Wales residents (50 percent) are more likely to agree. Northern Territory residents (41 percent) are less likely to agree.

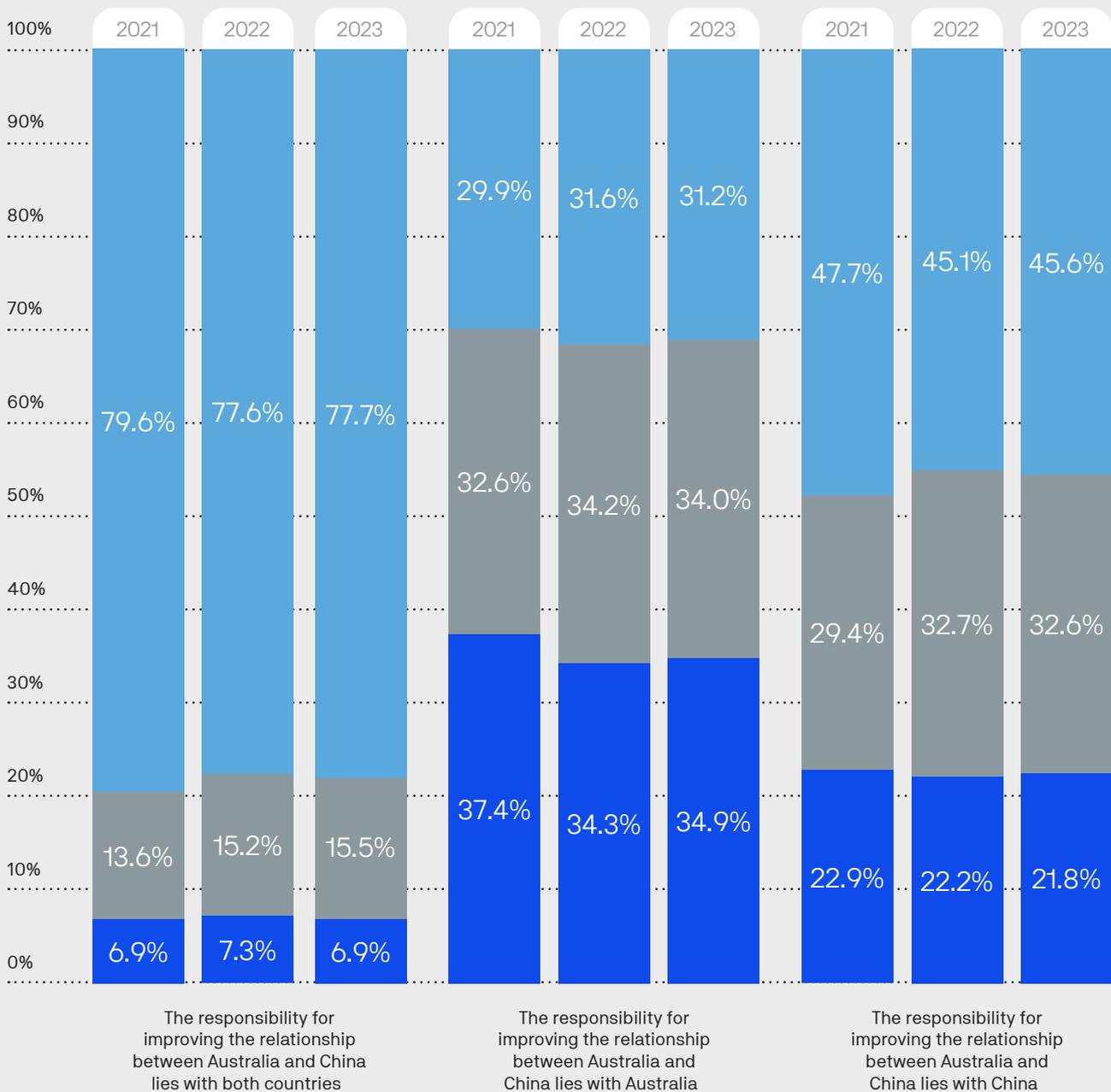
‘The responsibility for improving the relationship between Australia and China lies with Australia’

Thirty-one percent of Australians agree, a continuation of views expressed in 2022 (32 percent) and 2021 (30 percent). Thirty-four percent express neutrality and 35 percent disagree (Figure 8).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18-34 (41 percent) are more likely to agree. Older Australians aged 55+(26 percent) are less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (25 percent) are less likely to agree).

Figure 9. Responsibility for improving the Australia-China relationship



● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree

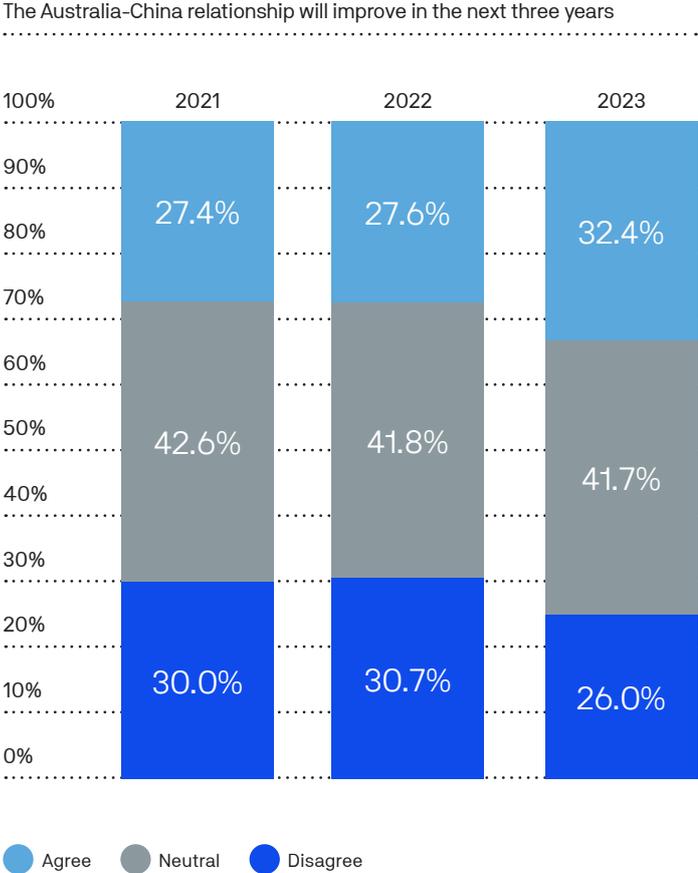
1.9 Future outlook

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

Thirty-two percent of Australians agree, a four-point increase from 2022 (28 percent) and five-point increase from 2021 (27 percent). Forty-two percent express neutrality and 26 percent disagree (Figure 9).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18-34 (36 percent) are more likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** Tasmania residents (39 percent) are more likely to agree. Queensland residents (27 percent) are less likely to agree. **An education divide:** Australians who completed a bachelor's degree (36 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (39 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (25 percent) are less likely to agree.

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



2. Politics and political communication

2.1 Background

Dialogue between Australia and China recommenced following the election of the Australian Labor Party to federal government after several years without high-level bilateral engagement.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang sent Prime Minister Albanese a congratulatory message on his election victory in May, marking the first senior ministerial contact in two years.¹¹ The Prime Minister then met with President Xi Jinping on November 15 on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Bali. The Prime Minister this year confirmed that he has been invited to visit China.¹²

On either side of this leader-level meeting last year, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Marles twice met with Chinese Defence Minister Wei Fenghe and Foreign Minister Penny Wong met then-Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of various multilateral meetings, followed by a visit to Beijing for the Sixth Australia-China Foreign and Strategic Dialogue in December. Trade Minister Don Farrell and his Chinese counterpart Commerce Minister Wang Wentao participated in a virtual meeting in February this year, followed by a visit to Beijing by Minister Farrell in May.

Australian state premiers Daniel Andrews (Victoria) and Mark McGowan (Western Australia) have visited China and Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk is considering a visit in November.¹³ Foreign affairs and defence officials have also engaged in exchanges of views.¹⁴

Chinese ministers have adopted more conciliatory rhetoric, with then-Foreign Minister Wang in September last year stating that Australia and China should 'meet each other halfway'.¹⁵ This marked a shift from previous remarks to the Morrison government which insisted that the onus was on Australia to fix the relationship. This rapprochement with Australia goes hand-in-hand with Beijing's attempt at a global diplomatic charm offensive – albeit one which has been met with scepticism. Limits to Beijing's professed new reserves of goodwill were on display last year, for example, as President Xi delivered a public dressing down of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

after the closing session of the G20 following an alleged leak of an earlier conversation.

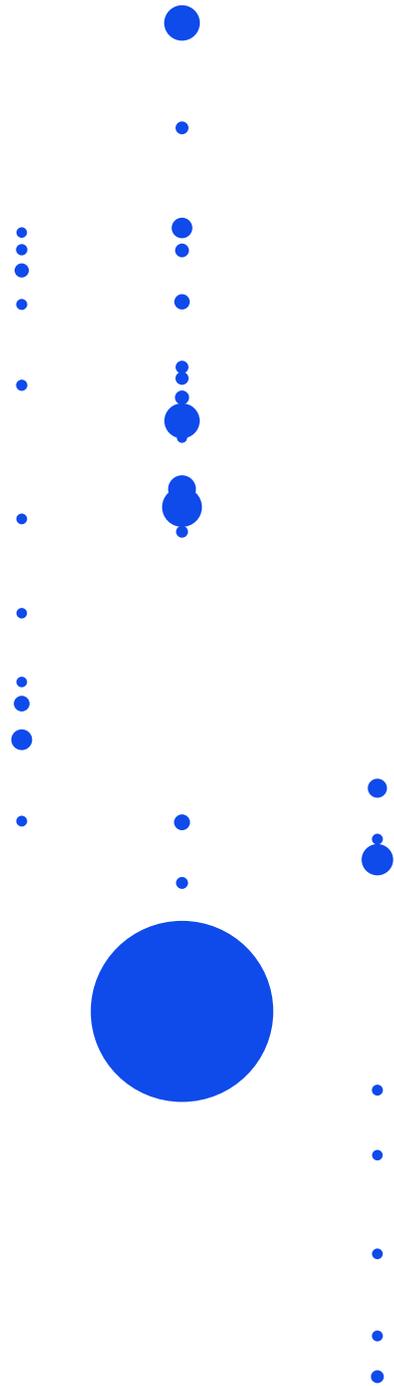
The Australian government has cleaved to tight messaging discipline with respect to China policy. Ministers insist on the removal of coercive economic measures, repeat that policy established by the previous government will continue, and emphasise security challenges presented by China, underlining that 'the substantive national interests that Australia has, that we've had over the last decade, we see us still having.'¹⁶ However, the rhetoric used to prosecute Australian interests has been more carefully measured.

Prime Minister Albanese said this year that Australia has 'an interest in a mature relationship... a return to diplomacy. Stopping the loud hailer.' He criticised the 'use of international diplomacy to send domestic political messages... towards the end of the previous government', noting, 'That wasn't about Australia's national interest or about our security. It was about sending a message here.'¹⁷

The Deputy Prime Minister has outlined the government's aim to be 'very sober and professional and diplomatic in the way in which we speak with our international voice',¹⁸ avoiding 'chest-beating'¹⁹ and 'belligerence',²⁰ while the Foreign Minister has stated that the government would 'not be trying to make media headlines' out of the Australia-China relationship.²¹ Senator Wong has pointed to the need to be 'calm, considered and disciplined' when speaking about engagement with, and Australia's relationship with, the China, terming it 'a complex and consequential relationship' and acknowledging the 'obvious challenges'.²²

The Labor government's foreign policy approach places emphasis on the interdependency of diplomacy and defence.²³ Foreign Minister Wong in September stressed the government's intent to 'bring DFAT [the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade] back to the centre of the Australian government' and have the department be 'the first adviser on Australia's engagement in the world'.²⁴

The two major parties' rhetoric on China relations is believed to have had some bearing on voting behaviour in the 2022 federal election. Former Liberal minister Alan Tudge, reflecting on his party's election loss said that 'members of the Chinese community interpreted some of our language as being too strong and we had a backlash from that'.²⁵ An internal review into the Liberal Party's loss at the federal election published in December found that a decrease in support from the Australian-Chinese community was one of the key factors underpinning its defeat at the polls. The review noted that rebuilding the relationship with the community 'must therefore be a priority during this term of Parliament', emphasising that 'There is a particular need for the Party's representatives to be sensitive to the genuine concerns of the Chinese community and to ensure language used cannot be misinterpreted as insensitive.'²⁶



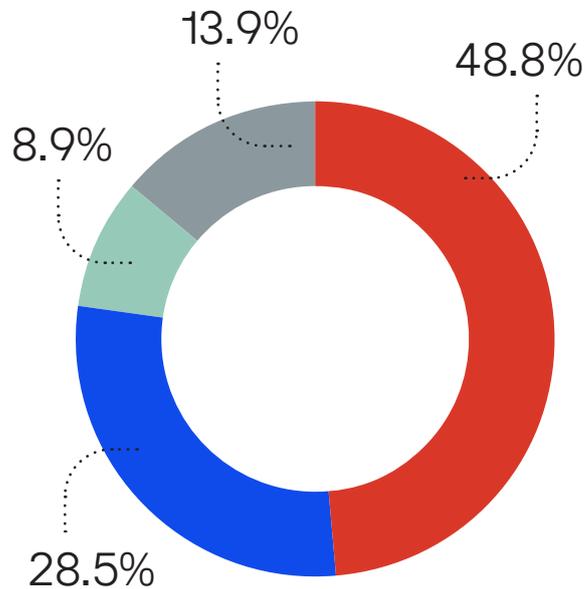
2.2 Political party best placed to handle Australia's China policy

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

The near-majority of respondents nominated the Australian Labor Party (49 percent) as the political party best placed to handle Australia's China policy, a 14-point increase from 2022 (35 percent). Twenty-nine percent of Australians say the Liberal/National coalition is best placed to handle Australia's China policy, a seven-point decrease from 2022 (36 percent). Nine percent nominated the Greens, while 14 percent nominated 'Other' (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?



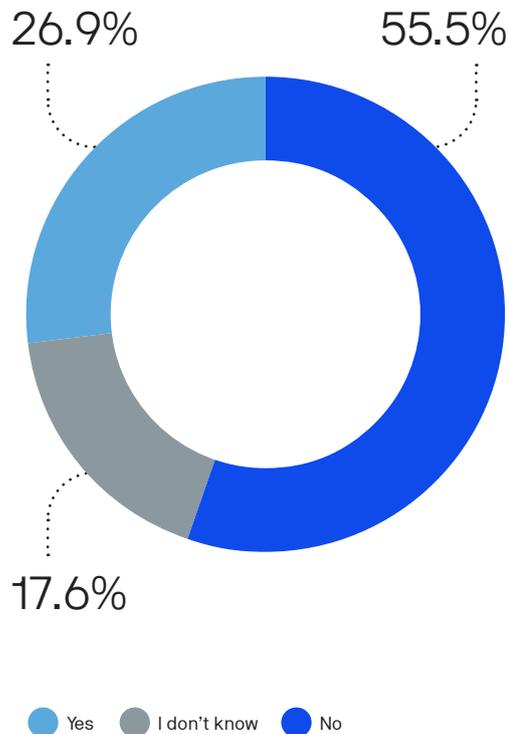
2.3 Management of China policy and impact on 2022 federal election vote

'Is the Australian government's management of China policy an issue that had an impact on your vote in the federal election that took place in 2022?'

Just over a quarter of Australians (27 percent) said that the then-Morrison government's management of China policy was an issue that had an impact on their 2022 federal election vote. The majority of Australians (56 percent) said that the issue did not have an impact on their vote, while 18 percent said they didn't know (Figure 11).

Figure 11. **Management of China policy: An issue that impacted 2022 federal election vote?**

Is the Australian government's management of China policy an issue that had an impact on your vote in the federal election that took place in 2022?



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’

Fifty-nine percent of Australians agree, a four-point decrease from 2022 (63 percent). Twenty-eight percent express neutrality and 13 percent disagree (Figure 12).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (70 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (47 percent) are less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (65 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (44 percent) are less 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

Deputy Prime Minister Marles last year described China as Australia's 'biggest security anxiety', stating that present circumstances constituted 'the toughest strategic environment we've encountered in over 70 years.'²⁷ Even more starkly, Defence Industry Pat Conroy told military contractors that Australia was 'no longer on a peacetime setting'.²⁸

Prime Minister Albanese has made note of how broad-reaching the issue of national security now is,²⁹ and Foreign Minister Wong has stressed the importance of recognising 'that the sort of relationship... where we separated our economic and our strategic relationships and perspectives... that world has changed.'³⁰

China has continued its military build-up, announcing a defence budget increase of 7.2 percent in March – a slight increase over the previous year's growth figure – bringing the official total to about \$330 billion.³¹ It has also continued to employ grey-zone activities, with, for example, the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) involved in a number of number of dangerous incidents with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and the Royal Canadian Air Force.^{32 33}

China and the Solomon Islands signed a security agreement in April 2022 which prompted alarm in Australia about the potential for the agreement allowing Beijing to set up military facilities less than 2,000 kilometres from Australian shores.³⁴ However, the Australian government has since said it has received 'assurances' from Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare that his 'government does not intend for there to be a persistent military presence or foreign military base' in the country.³⁵

In August last year, Beijing aggressively responded to United States' House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan by conducting large-scale military exercises and launching ballistic missile into waters around Taiwan's coastline. It conducted similar military drills around the island after Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen's 'transit' through the United States earlier this year.³⁶

China's White Paper on Taiwan, released in August 2022, stated that Beijing 'will not renounce the use of force' and 'reserve the option of taking all necessary

measures'.³⁷ The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to Australia in an address to the National Press Club said 'you can use your imagination' with respect to its reference to what 'all necessary means' meant.³⁸

In the face of acute tensions in the Taiwan Strait, the Australian government has denounced Beijing's provocations but continues to urge calm, de-escalation and restraint.³⁹ The government has consistently articulated support for the status quo⁴⁰ even as some uncertainty surrounds US policy on Taiwan – President Joe Biden has on several occasions indicated that the US would be willing to get involved militarily to defence Taiwan, with subsequent winding back by the White House.⁴¹

Last year, the Australian government launched a Defence Strategic Review to 'examine force structure, force posture and preparedness, and investment prioritisation'⁴² in a context where, in the Prime Minister's words, 'China has taken a more aggressive posture in the region.'⁴³ The unclassified version of the review report, released after this poll was conducted, stated that the US is no longer the 'unipolar leader of the Indo-Pacific,' and that China is 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 [it's] strategic intent.'⁴⁴

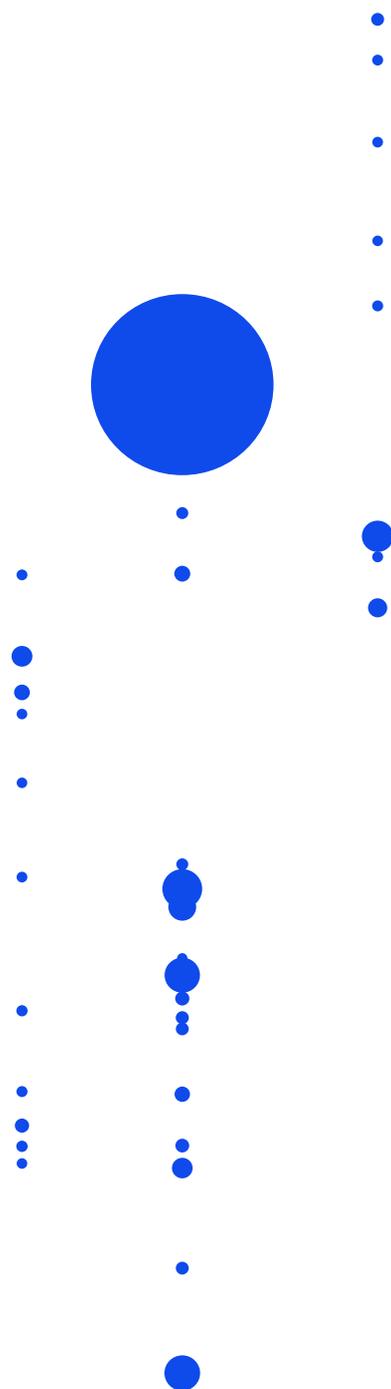
A pathway towards Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS (Australia-United Kingdom-United States) security partnership, first announced in 2021,⁴⁵ was shared with the public earlier this year.⁴⁶ The program is estimated to cost up to \$368 billion over about 30 years. Australia's acquisition of the capability will occur through a phased process. Former Australian prime minister Paul Keating in a well-publicised intervention in March questioned the program with respect to issues of cost, sovereignty and efficacy,^{46a} which appeared to spark more vigorous national discussion about the deal.^{46b} Beijing's response, while sustained, has been relatively muted for the time being, although it has, to be sure, regularly articulated its diplomatic protests.⁴⁷

In March, a one-and-a-half day group discussion

with five defence and security specialists hosted by Nine Media produced a well-publicised communique which outlined the specialists' belief that 'Australia faces the prospect of armed conflict in the Indo-Pacific within three years. The most serious risk is a Chinese attack on Taiwan that sparks a conflict with the US and other democracies, including Australia.'⁴⁸ This timeline had previously been voiced by Opposition Leader Peter Dutton who as Defence Minister had said in April last year, 'There is potential for conflict in our area in a couple of years.'⁴⁹ Foreign Minister Wong has rejected engaging with hypotheticals with respect to 'timelines and scenarios when it comes to Taiwan', calling it 'the most dangerous of parlour games'.⁵⁰

This year also marks the ten-year anniversary of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In the wake of the China's borders re-opening following a three-year closure during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a push by Beijing to reinvigorate the BRI. The PRC's Ambassador to Australia recently pressed for Australian government reconsideration of the BRI.⁵¹

In April, the Australian government banned the use of TikTok on government devices,⁵² following similar measures by like-minded nations.⁵³ All Australian state and territory governments have followed suit. The federal government has also undertaken to remove surveillance equipment by Chinese companies Hikvision and Dahua in all federal agencies⁵⁴ after an audit in February concluded that around 900 security cameras, intercoms, electronic entry systems made by these companies were installed in approximately 250 federal government sites.⁵⁵



3.2 Security and stability

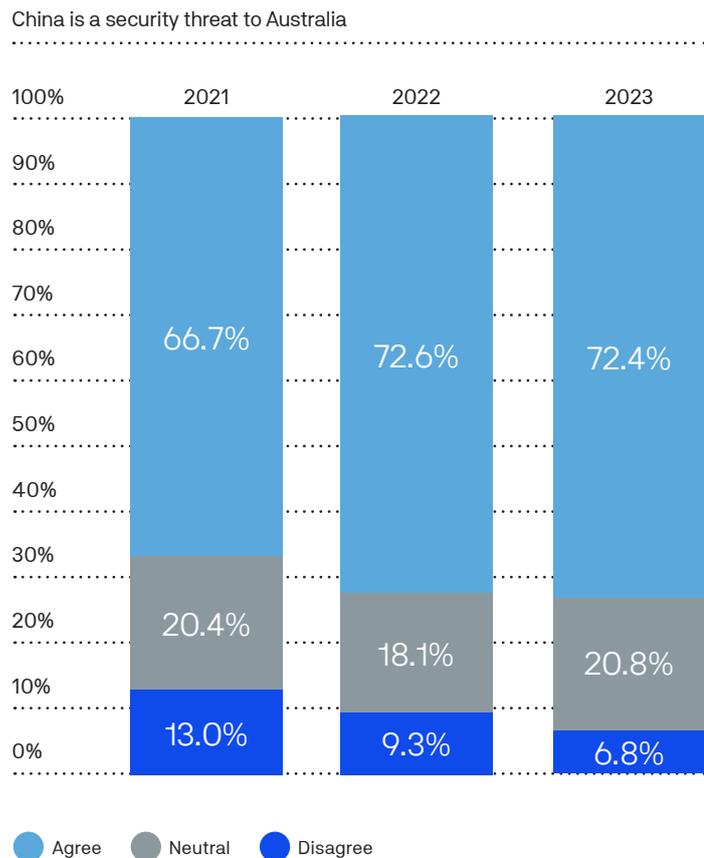
'China is a security threat to Australia'

Seventy-two percent agree, a general continuation of views in 2022 (73 percent), having jumped to this high point from 67 percent in 2021.

A state/territory divide: Tasmania residents are less likely to agree (50 percent). **An urban/rural divide:** Australians who reside in rural areas (93 percent) are more likely to agree compared with those who reside in small or large metropolitan areas.

An education divide: Those who completed high school (86 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (81 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree.

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



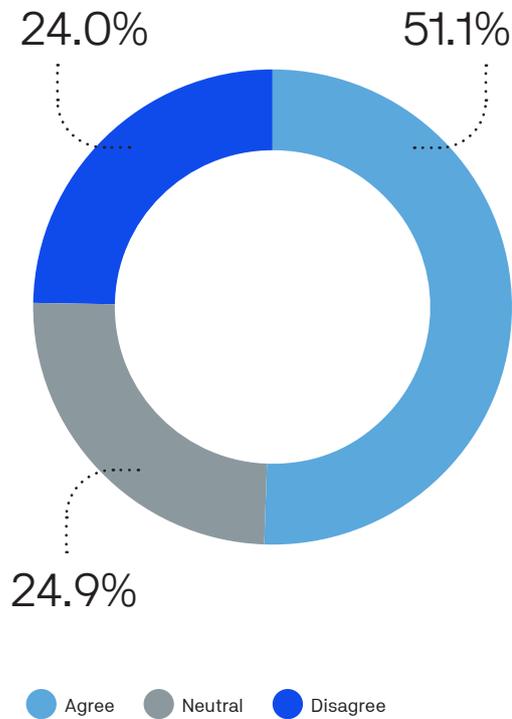
‘Military conflict with China within three years is a serious possibility’

Just over half of Australians (51 percent) agree. Twenty-five percent express neutrality and 24 percent disagree (Figure 14).

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (71 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree.

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

Military conflict with China within three years is a serious possibility



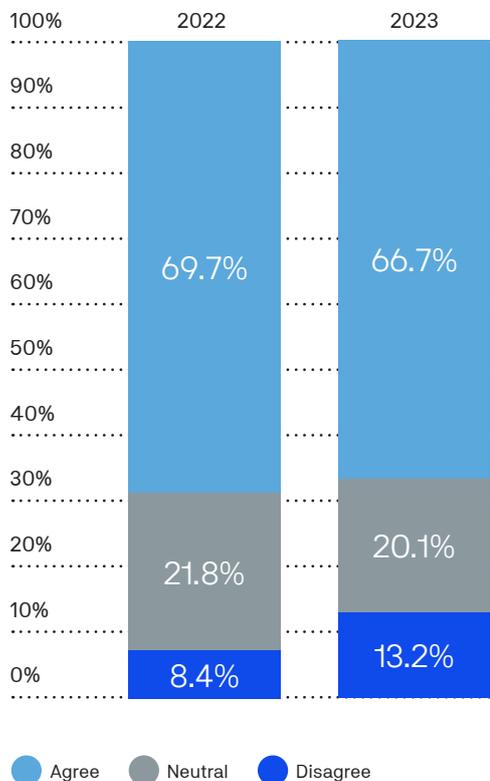
‘The Australian government is right to increase defence spending, to balance, among other considerations, China’s growing military might’

Sixty-seven percent of Australians agree, a three-point decrease from 2022 (70 percent). Twenty percent express neutrality and 13 percent disagree.

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (84 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (45 percent) are less likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** South Australia residents (86 percent) are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (87 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (49 percent) are less 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



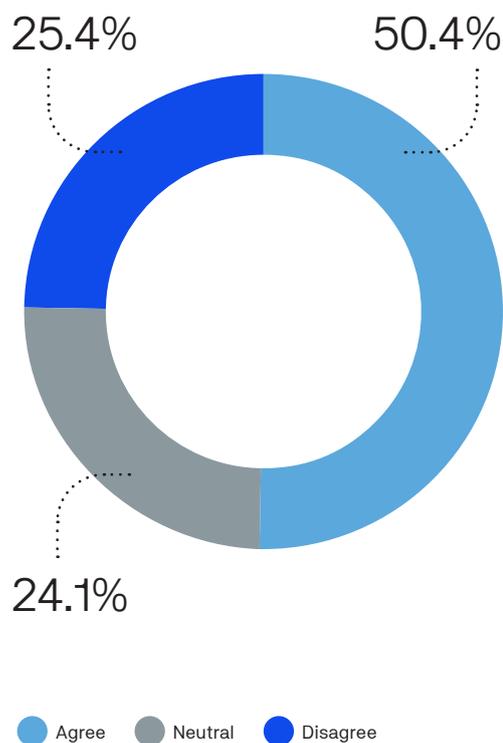
‘The Australian government is right to increase defence spending, even if it means budget cuts in other areas, for example health and education, to balance, among other considerations, China’s growing military might’

Half of Australians (50 percent) agree. Twenty-four percent express neutrality and 25 percent disagree (Figure 16).

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (67 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are 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



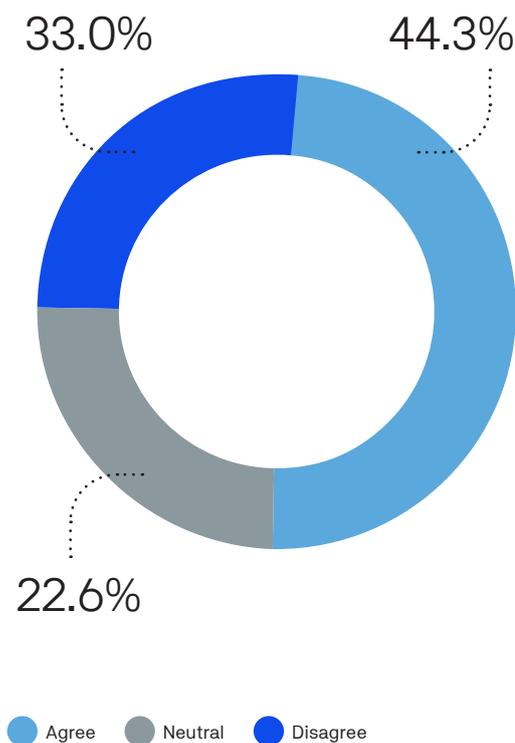
‘The Australian government’s plan to acquire nuclear submarines under the Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) trilateral security partnership will help keep Australia secure from a military threat from China’

Forty-four percent of Australians agree. Twenty-three percent express neutrality and 33 percent disagree (Figure 17).

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (40 percent) are less likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (53 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are 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

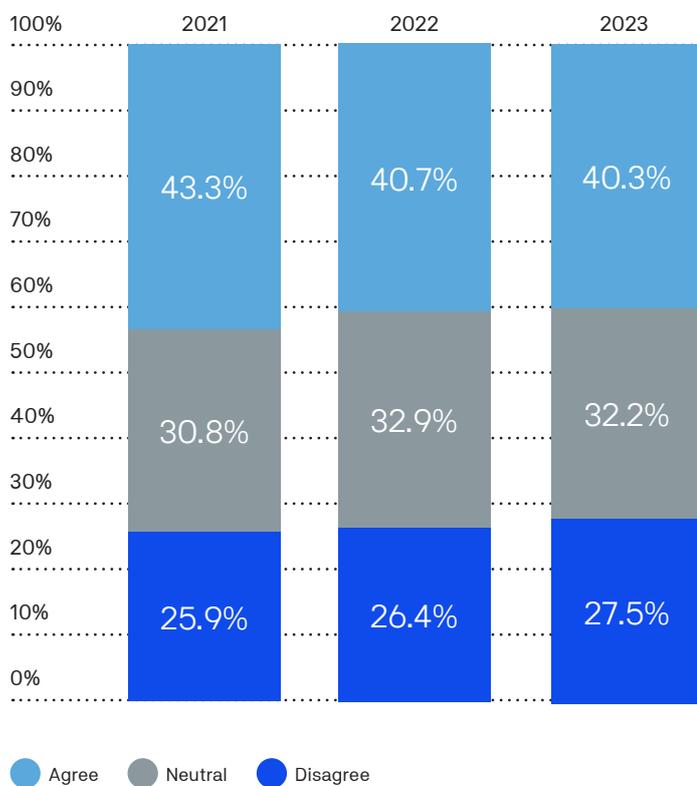


‘Australia should form trade and security blocs with other countries that deliberately exclude China’

Four in 10 Australians (40 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (41 percent) and 2021 (43 percent). Thirty-two percent express neutrality and 28 percent disagree (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Trade and security blocs

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

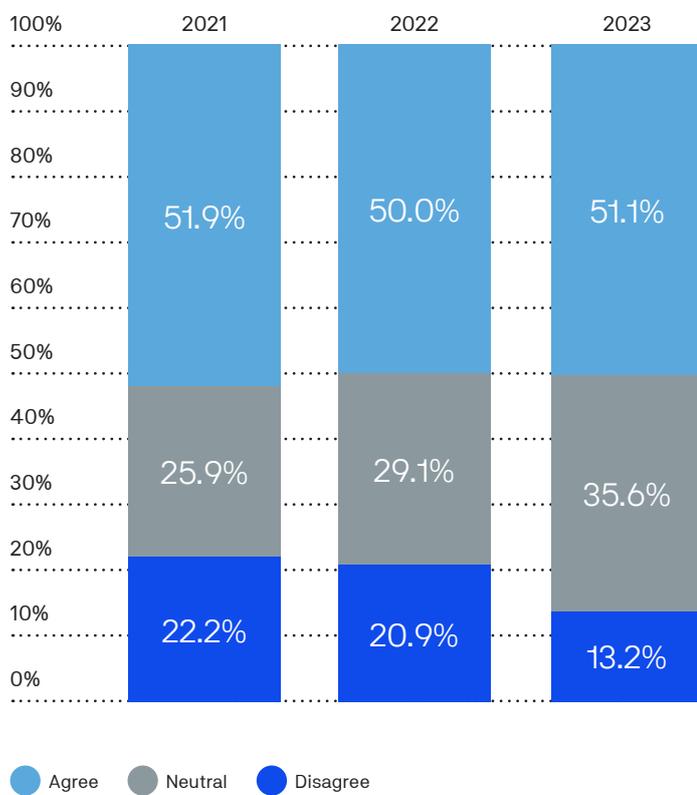


‘Australia’s relationship with China contributes to regional stability and security’

Just over half of Australian (51 percent) agree, a general continuation of views in 2022 (50 percent) and 2021 (52 percent). Thirty-six percent express neutrality and 13 percent disagree (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’

Australians are fairly evenly split between agreeing and disagreeing with this proposition. Thirty-seven percent of Australians agree, a two-point decrease from 2022 (39 percent). Twenty-eight percent express neutrality and 36 percent disagree, a two-point increase from 2022 (34 percent) (Figure 20).

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

Almost half of Australians (49 percent) agree, a seven-point increase from 2022 (42 percent), although still just under the high of 2021 (53 percent). Twenty-one percent express neutrality and 30 percent disagree (Figure 21).

A state/territory divide: Northern Territory residents are more likely to agree (85 percent).

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

Just over half of Australians (52 percent) agree, a four-point decrease from 2022 (56 percent) but still up from the low of 2021 (45 percent). Thirty percent express neutrality and 18 percent disagree (Figure 21).

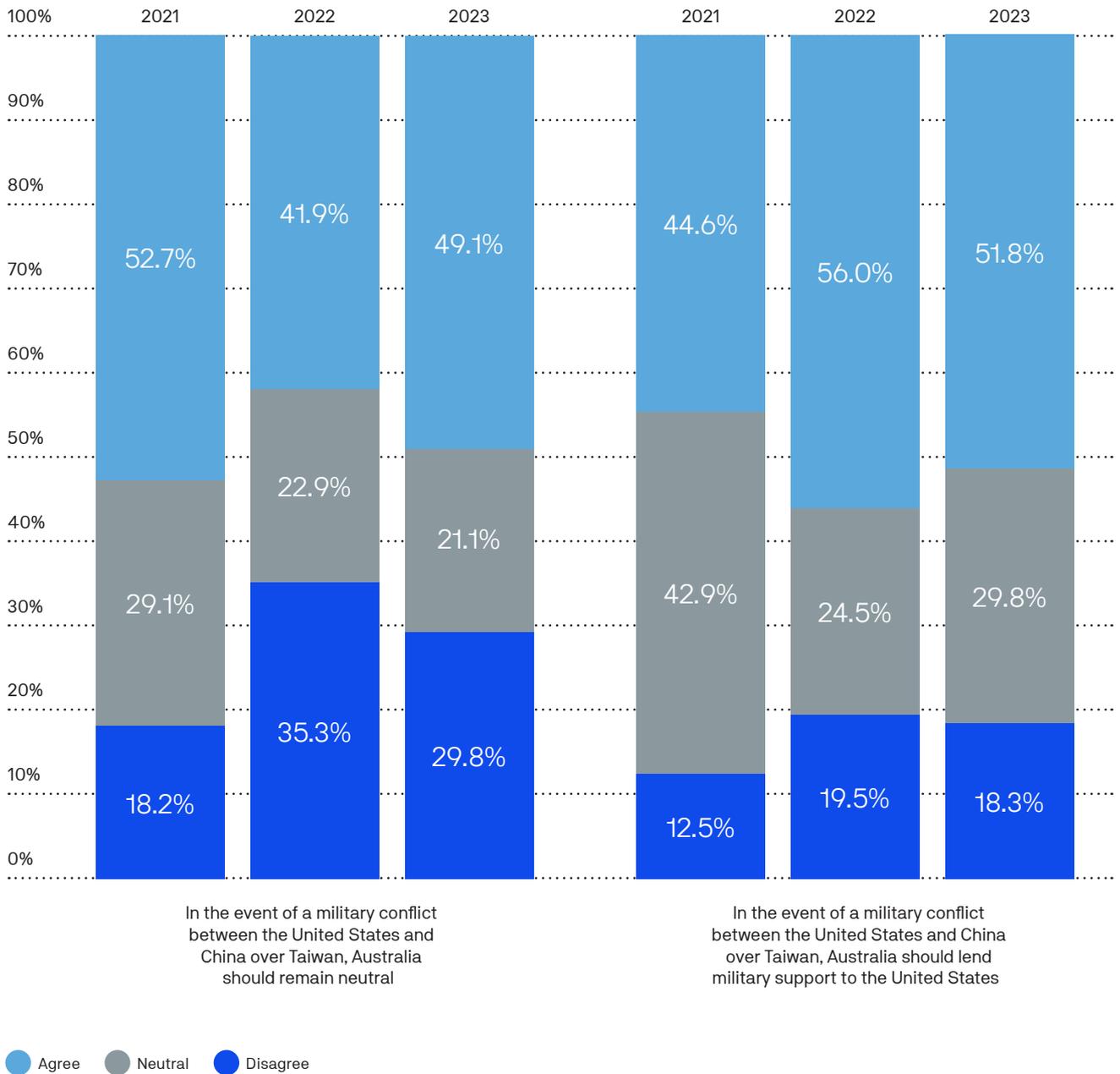
A political divide: Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (69 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree.

Figure 20. Defence of Taiwan

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



Figure 21. Conflict over Taiwan between the US and China



3.4 Cybersecurity

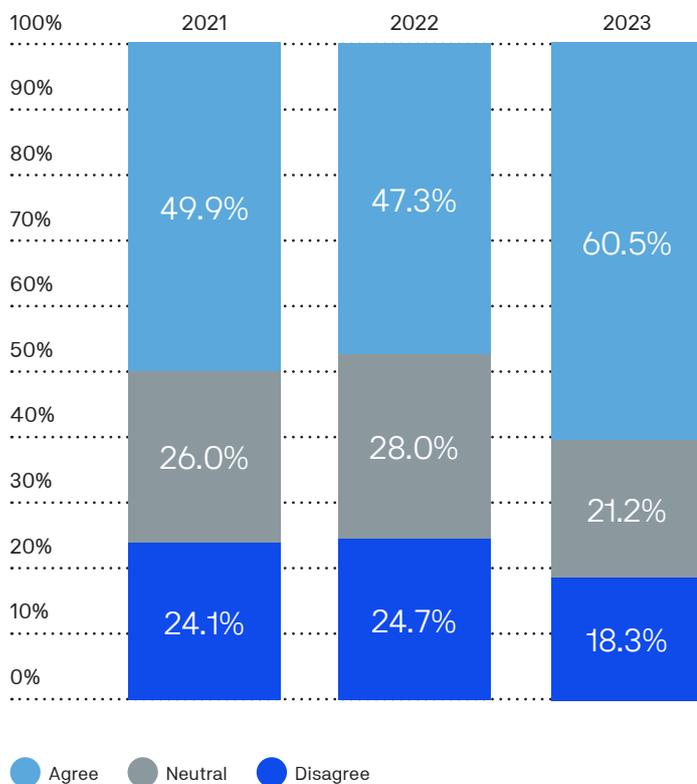
‘Australia should ban Chinese-owned apps such as TikTok and WeChat’

About six in 10 Australians (61 percent) agree. This is a 14-point increase from 2022 (47 percent). Twenty-one percent express neutrality and 18 percent disagree (Figure 22).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (75 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (44 percent) are less likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** Australian Capital Territory residents are more likely to agree (75 percent). Tasmania residents were less likely to agree (45 percent). **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (68 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (51 percent) are less 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



‘Australia was right to ban the use of Chinese-owned app TikTok on phones used by Australian government employees’

Seventy-six percent of Australians agree. Seventeen percent express neutrality and seven percent disagree (Figure 23).

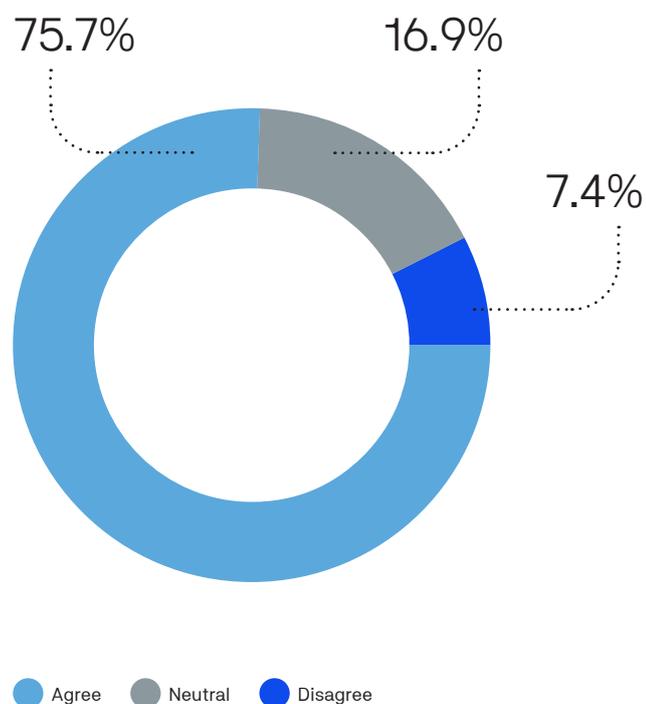
An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (86 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (64 percent) are less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (89 percent) are more likely to agree. Western Australia residents (52 percent) are less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (87 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (68 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 23. **Support for the Australian government’s ban on TikTok on Australian government devices**

Australia was right to ban the use of Chinese-owned app TikTok on phones used by Australian government employees



‘The Australian government was right to remove Chinese-made surveillance equipment (e.g., security cameras) from Australian government buildings’

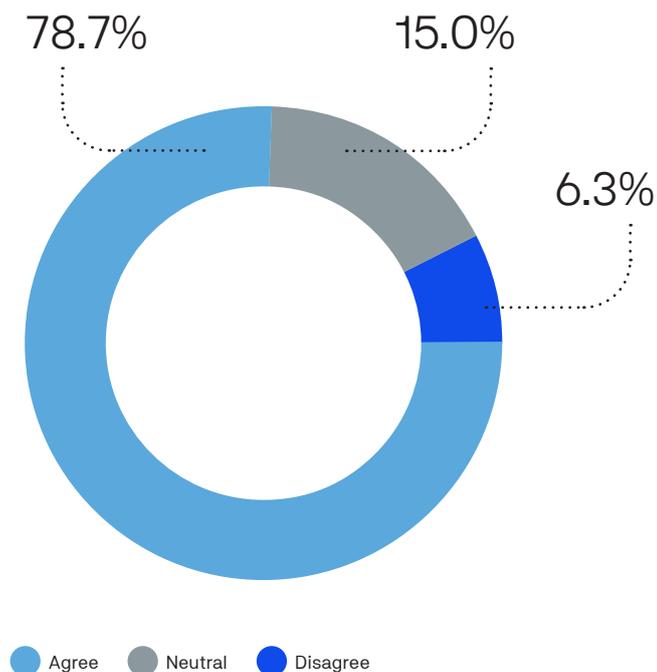
Nearly eight in 10 Australians (79 percent) agree. Fifteen percent express neutrality and six percent disagree (Figure 24).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (86 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (65 percent) are less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (90 percent) are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (85 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (65 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 24. **Support for the Australian government’s removal of Chinese-made surveillance equipment from Australian government buildings**

The Australian government was right to remove Chinese-made surveillance equipment (e.g., security cameras) from Australian government buildings



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

The majority of Australians (82 percent) agree, a continuation of views from 2022 (81 percent). Fourteen percent express neutrality and 4 percent disagree (Figure 25).

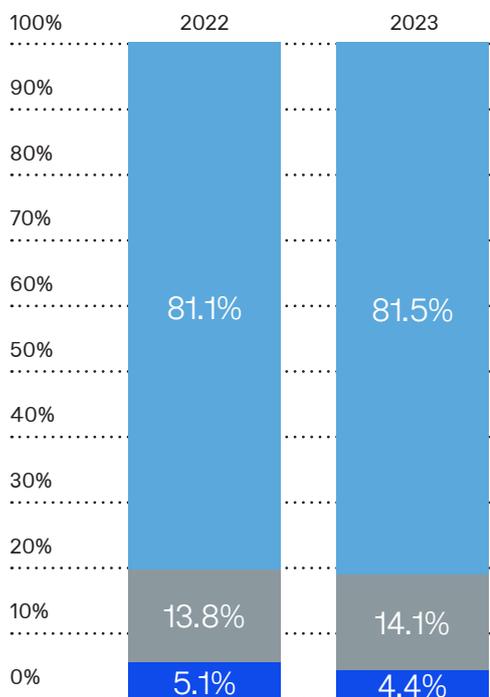
An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (93 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (68 percent) are less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (90 percent) are more likely to agree. Western Australia residents (74 percent) are less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (91 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (65 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 25. Publicly attributing 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



● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree

3.5 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 (54 percent) agree, a three-point decrease from 2022 (57 percent). Thirty-nine percent express neutrality and eight percent disagree.

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (66 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (37 percent) are less likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (63 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (40 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 26. **The Belt and Road Initiative**

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



3.6 The South China Sea

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

Seven in 10 Australians agree (70 percent), a six-point increase from 2022 (64 percent) and an 11-point increase from 2021 (59 percent). Twenty percent express neutrality and 10 percent disagree (Figure 27).

Figure 27. **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

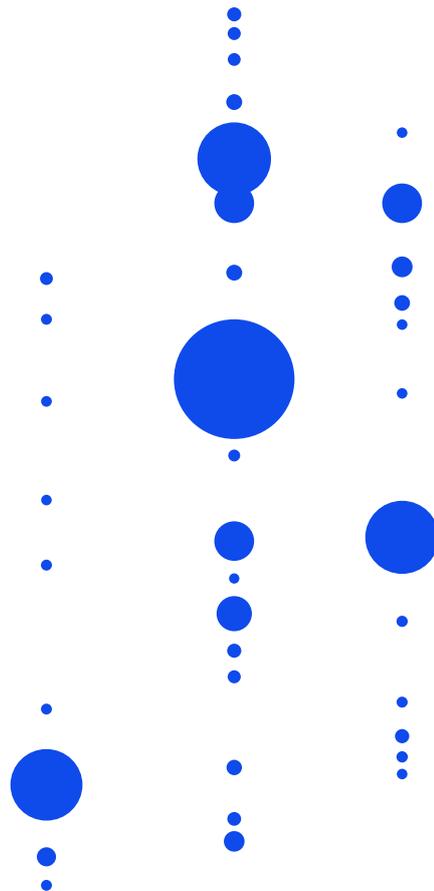
The Australian Labor Party has locked in behind the alliance, with Mr Albanese in his first week as Prime Minister affirming that ‘Australia’s pretty much in lockstep’ with the United States.⁵⁶ During Labor’s second month in office, Defence Minister Marles committed to moving cooperation between Australian and American forces ‘beyond interoperability to interchangeability’.⁵⁷ The alliance, he told a security summit, ‘has never been more important to our nation’.⁵⁸

Just before Australian federal election, Foreign Minister Wong confirmed that the Labor Party had shelved the John Howard-era formulation that ‘Australia doesn’t need to choose between the US and China’. She stated that ‘the way in which economic powers [are] utilised for strategic purposes means that duality... is no longer the case’, noting that ‘We have already chosen’.⁵⁹

Australia has since agreed to house up to six US Air Force B-52 strategic bombers at Tindal air base near Darwin by 2026.⁶⁰ And under the two pillars of AUKUS,⁶¹ nuclear propulsion technology as well as artificial intelligence and quantum technology will be shared.

Australia is also participating in the Indo-Pacific Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), launched by the United States in May last year.⁶² One stated aim of the IPEF is to ‘expand US economic leadership’ in the region.⁶³ The trade initiative at this stage involves ‘collective discussions toward future negotiations’. Both nations also recently reached an agreement to coordinate policies on critical minerals.⁶⁴

The Australian government has been vocal in urging the United States and China to maintain dialogue and establish guardrails to prevent a descent into major conflict.⁶⁵ It has sought to lower the temperature as tensions simmer between the two great powers. The Foreign Minister has emphasised that it is critical that ‘competition doesn’t escalate into contest, because that would be a very bad thing ...for the whole world’.⁶⁶ She said further that ‘we should be working to avert war, to deter always’ and a critical part of this was the need ‘to keep talking’.⁶⁷



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 agree (61 percent), a general continuation of views from 2022 (61 percent) and 2021 (63 percent). Twenty-six percent express neutrality and 13 percent disagree (Figure 28).

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (71 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (56 percent) are less likely to agree.

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

Australians are about as evenly split on this proposition this year as they were in 2022 and 2021. About a third of Australians (34 percent) agree, a general continuation of views expressed in 2022 (31 percent) and 2021 (33 percent). Thirty-two percent express neutrality and 34 percent disagree (Figure 28).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18-34 (39 percent) are more likely to agree. Older Australians aged 55+ (29 percent) are less likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** Victoria residents (17 percent) are less likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who nominate a minority party (37 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Australian Labor Party (27 percent) are less likely to agree.

'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) agree, a five-point increase from 2022 (42 percent) and an eight-point increase from 2021 (39 percent). Twenty-nine percent express neutrality and 24 percent disagree (Figure 28).

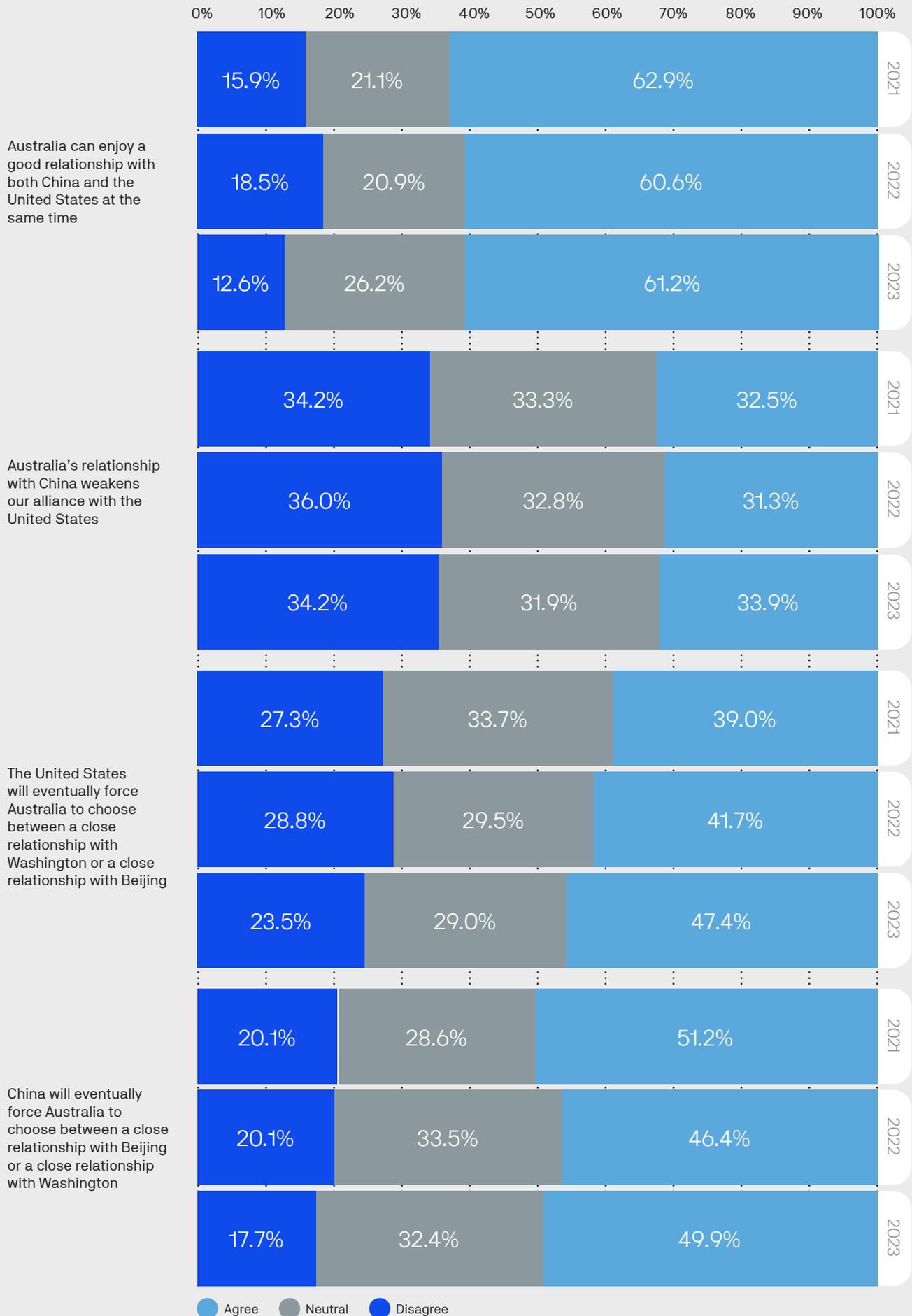
A political divide: Australians who nominate a minority party (56 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (43 percent) are less likely to agree.

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

Half of Australians (50 percent) agree, a four point increase from views expressed in 2022 (46 percent), inching back to the high of 51 percent in 2021. Thirty-two percent express neutrality and eighteen percent disagree (Figure 28).

An urban/rural divide: Australians who reside in small metropolitan areas (42 percent) are less likely to agree compared with those who reside in rural or large metropolitan areas. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (45 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree.

Figure 28. Australia's relationships with the United States and China



Agree Neutral Disagree

4.3 Influence in the region

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

Just over half of Australians (56 percent) agree, a five-point decrease from 2022 (61 percent) and a nine-point decrease from 2021 (65 percent). Twenty-eight percent express neutrality and 16 percent disagree (Figure 29).

Figure 29. 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

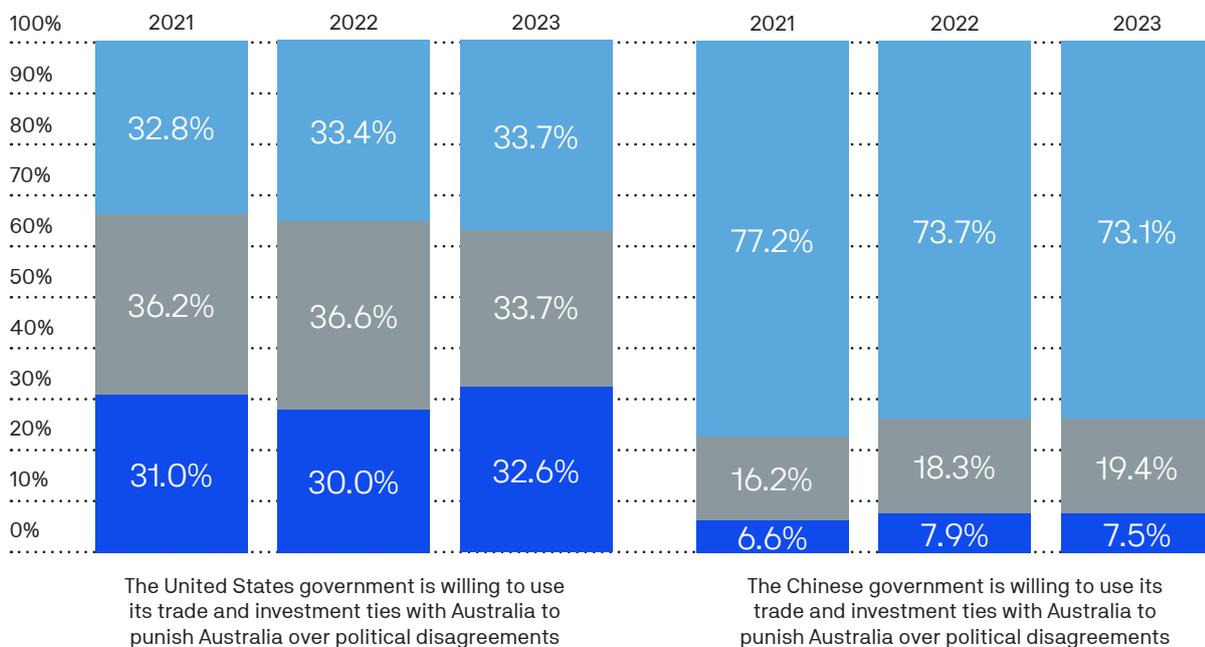
'The United States government is willing to use its trade and investment ties with Australia to punish Australia over political disagreements'

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (27 percent) are less likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate a minority party (45 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree.

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

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (84 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (61 percent) are less likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (83 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (60 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 30. The United States and China's willingness to mete out economic punishment over political disagreements



- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

5. Trade and investment

5.1 Background

Beijing's trade disruptions continue, although slowly easing in some sectors that had been subject to unofficial bans, such as coal, copper, cotton and timber.

Having made clear since their election last year that dialogue is preferred over disputation,⁶⁸ the Australian government in April agreed to temporarily suspend its World Trade Organization (WTO) case against China on its duties on barley – China having imposed an 80.5 percent import tariff in May 2020 – in exchange for Beijing undertaking an 'expedited review' of the matter over the next three to four months.⁶⁹

Wine, however, remains subject to tariffs of up to 218 percent, with Australia's WTO case against China ongoing, and restrictions continue on live lobster.

The Prime Minister and his senior ministers have maintained robust criticism of China's economic sanctions, making plain that further improvement in relations necessitates the lifting of all trade bans. In parallel, they have repeatedly emphasised the importance of the economic relationship with China as Australia's largest trading partner, noting that the nation accounts for more exports than 'Japan, US and Republic of Korea together combined'.⁷⁰ In this vein, Australian businesses have been encouraged 'to stay engaged in the China market, while accounting for risk'.⁷¹ Australian business leaders have resumed visits to China,⁷² with the first official business delegation supported by the Australian government travelling to China in April this year.⁷³

While the Australian government has stated that one policy objective is to 'try and re-establish' the economic relationship between Australia and China, another is the pursuit of trade diversification – this remains as central to the Albanese government's approach as it was under the Morrison government and the later years of the Turnbull government. Australia has, in the words of Trade Minister Don Farrell, 'put too much in the one basket in the past with our relationship with China'.⁷⁴

There is also growing securitisation of some dimensions of the Australia-China economic relationship, particularly due to concerns about China's dominance of rare earth supply

chains. For example, Treasurer Jim Chalmers on recommendation from the Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) recently blocked an application from Yuxiao Fund, an investment fund registered in Singapore controlled by a Chinese businessperson, to raise its ownership in an Australian rare earths producer with landholdings in Western Australia and the Northern Territory from 9.92 percent to 19.9 percent.⁷⁵

Resources Minister Madeleine King noted that the supply of rare earths 'is as much a national security issue as one of energy and economic security' and that China's 'unchallenged position across many aspects of the global critical minerals market' creates a strategic challenge.⁷⁶ As such, Australia is now looking towards working with likeminded partners to build new supply chains.

While Australia states that it applies the same risk-based approach to all foreign investment,⁷⁷ Beijing has vocalised concerns about what it perceives as a 'tightening of security inspections on Chinese companies investing and operating in Australia'.⁷⁸ Foreign investment from China has continued on some fronts, with FIRB approving the state-owned China Baowu Steel Group's \$1 billion 46 percent stake in a joint venture with Rio Tinto in an iron ore project in Western Australia – 'the biggest Chinese investment to be given the green light by Canberra since 2019', according to *The Australian*.⁷⁹

China continues to make its case for accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, but the Australian government have made relatively plain that its trade sanctions will affect its bid. On Taiwan's application, the Prime Minister last year seemed to imply that Australia would not support accession,⁸⁰ with a report from the *South China Morning Post* that the Trade Minister communicated a similar message to his Chinese counterpart during their May meeting in Beijing.⁸¹

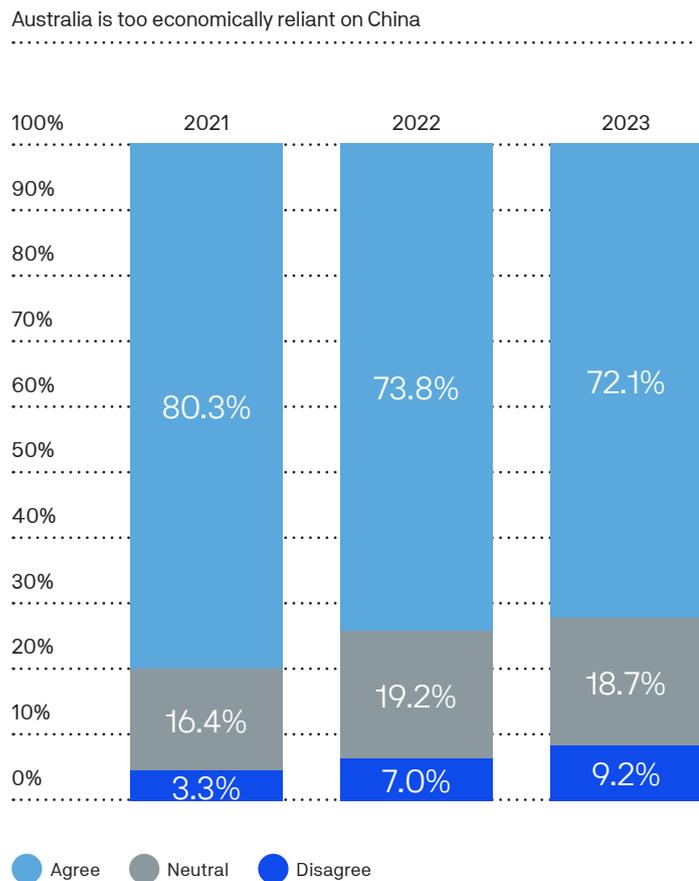
A review into the Port of Darwin is ongoing, having been commissioned by the Prime Minister in June 2022 as one of his first acts in office.⁸² The Australian Labor Party has flagged its opposition to the lease of the port since 2015.⁸³

5.2 The economic relationship overall

'Australia is too economically reliant on China'

Seventy-two percent of Australians agree, a steady decrease from 2022 (74 percent) and 2021 (80 percent). Nineteen percent express neutrality and nine percent disagree (Figure 31).

Figure 31. **Economic overreliance on China**

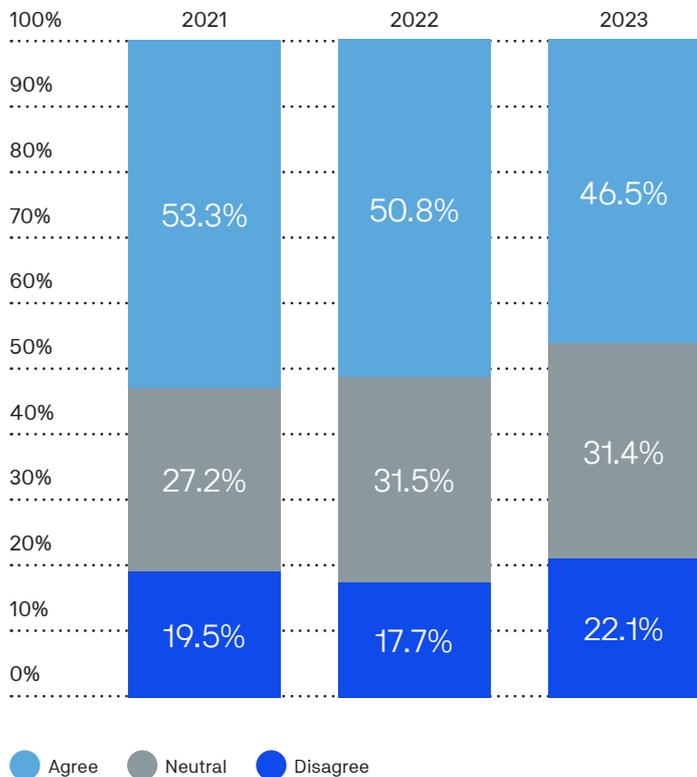


'Australia's economic relationship with China is more of an economic risk than an economic opportunity'

Forty-seven percent of Australians agree, a four-point decrease from 2022 (51 percent) and a six-point decrease from 2021 (53 percent). Thirty-one percent express neutrality and 22 percent disagree (Figure 32).

Figure 32. 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 agree, a two-point increase from 2022 (42 percent). Thirty-five percent express neutrality and 21 percent disagree (Figure 33).

Figure 33. 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-seven percent of Australians agree, a three-point decrease from 2022 (60 percent) and six-point decrease 2021 (63 percent). Twenty-four percent express neutrality and 19 percent disagree (Figure 34).

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (73 percent) are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (66 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (39 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 34. **Economic engagement with China and prosperity**

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

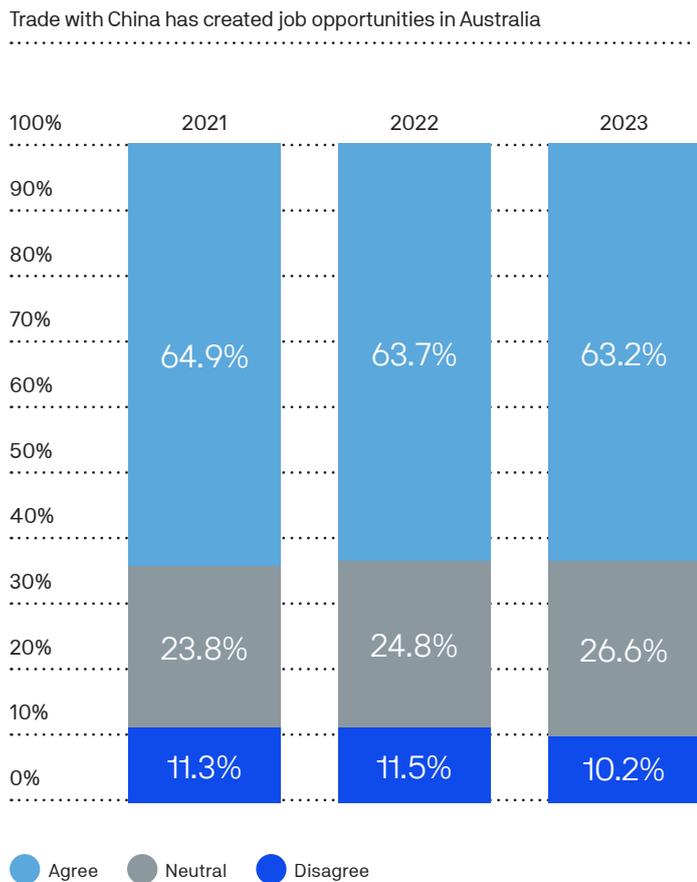


‘Trade with China has created job opportunities in Australia’

About six in 10 Australians (63 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (64 percent) and 2023 (65 percent). Twenty-seven percent express neutrality and 10 percent disagree (Figure 35).

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (75 percent) are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (71 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (50 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 35. Trade with China and employment



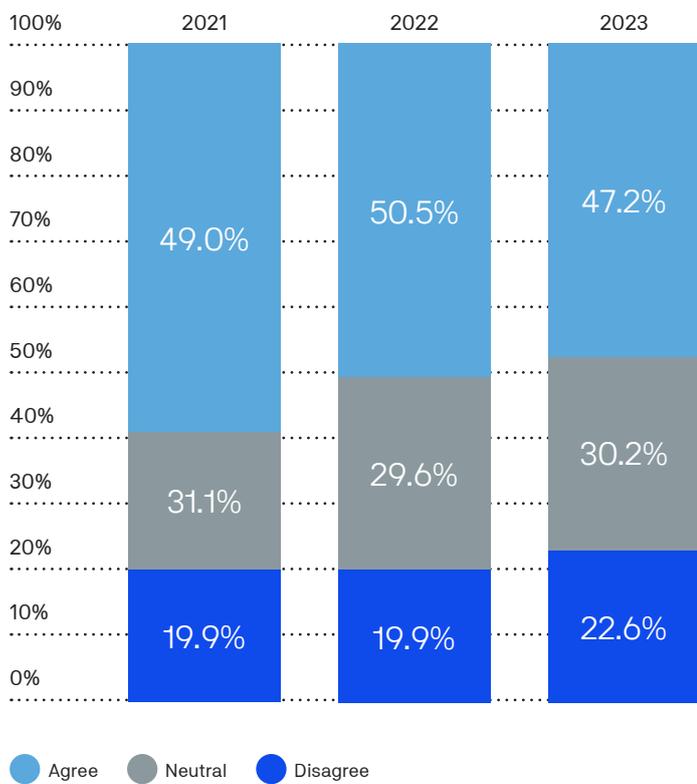
‘The Australian government needs to be supportive of having closer economic ties with China’

Forty-seven percent of Australians agree, a four-point decrease from 2022 (51 percent). Thirty percent express neutrality and 23 percent disagree (Figure 36).

A state/territory divide: Queensland residents (43 percent) are less likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (54 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree.

Figure 36. **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-five percent of Australians agree, a six-point increase from 2022 (49 percent). Thirty-four percent express neutrality and 11 percent disagree (Figure 37).

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (63 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (39 percent) are less likely to agree.

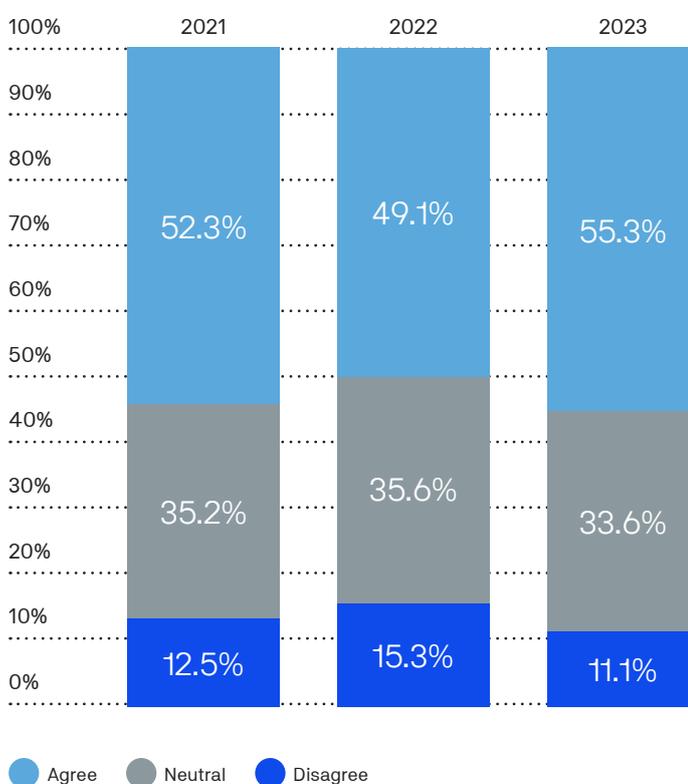
‘The Australian government should support China’s bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement which 11 countries, including Australia, signed in 2018’

About a third of Australians (35 percent) agree, a four-point increase from 2022 (31 percent). Forty-five percent express neutrality and twenty-one percent disagree (Figure 38).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18-34 (43 percent) are more likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** Tasmania residents (47 percent) are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (43 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (27 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 37. The China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA)

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

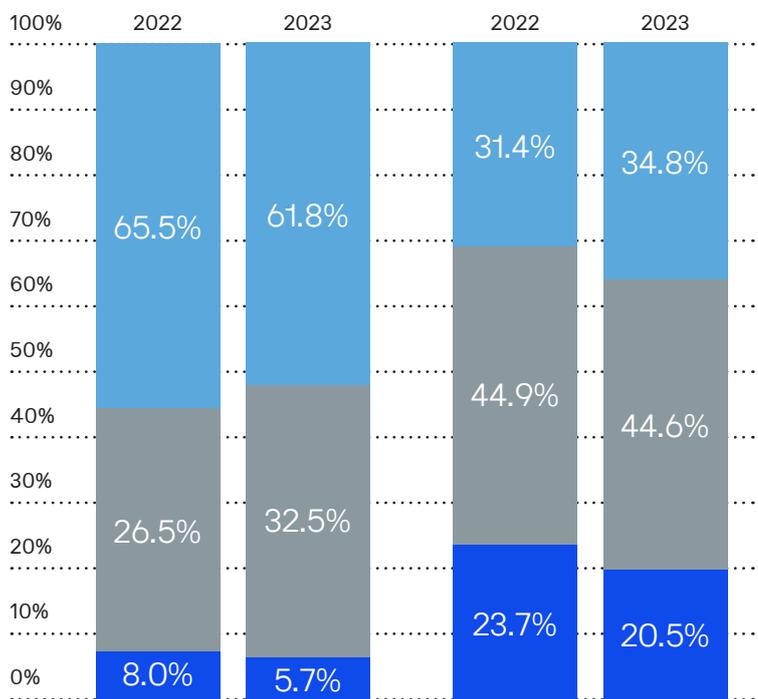


‘The Australian government should support Taiwan’s bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement which 11 countries, including Australia, signed in 2018’

About six in 10 Australians (62 percent) agree, a four-point decrease from 2022 (66 percent). Thirty-three percent express neutrality and six percent disagree (Figure 38).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18-34 (50 percent) are less likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** Victoria residents (74 percent) and South Australia residents (72 percent) are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (77 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (38 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 38. **Expansion of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)**



The Australian government should support Taiwan’s bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

The Australian government should support China’s bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree

5.4 Trade case study: Tourism

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

Just over seven in 10 Australians (72 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (70 percent) and 2021 (74 percent). Nineteen percent express neutrality and nine percent disagree (Figure 39).

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (78 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (62 percent) are less likely to agree (Figure 39).

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

Just over six in 10 Australians (62 percent) agree, a continuation of views from 2022 (62 percent) and 2021 (63 percent). Twenty-four percent express neutrality and 13 percent disagree (Figure 39).

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (79 percent) are more likely to agree.

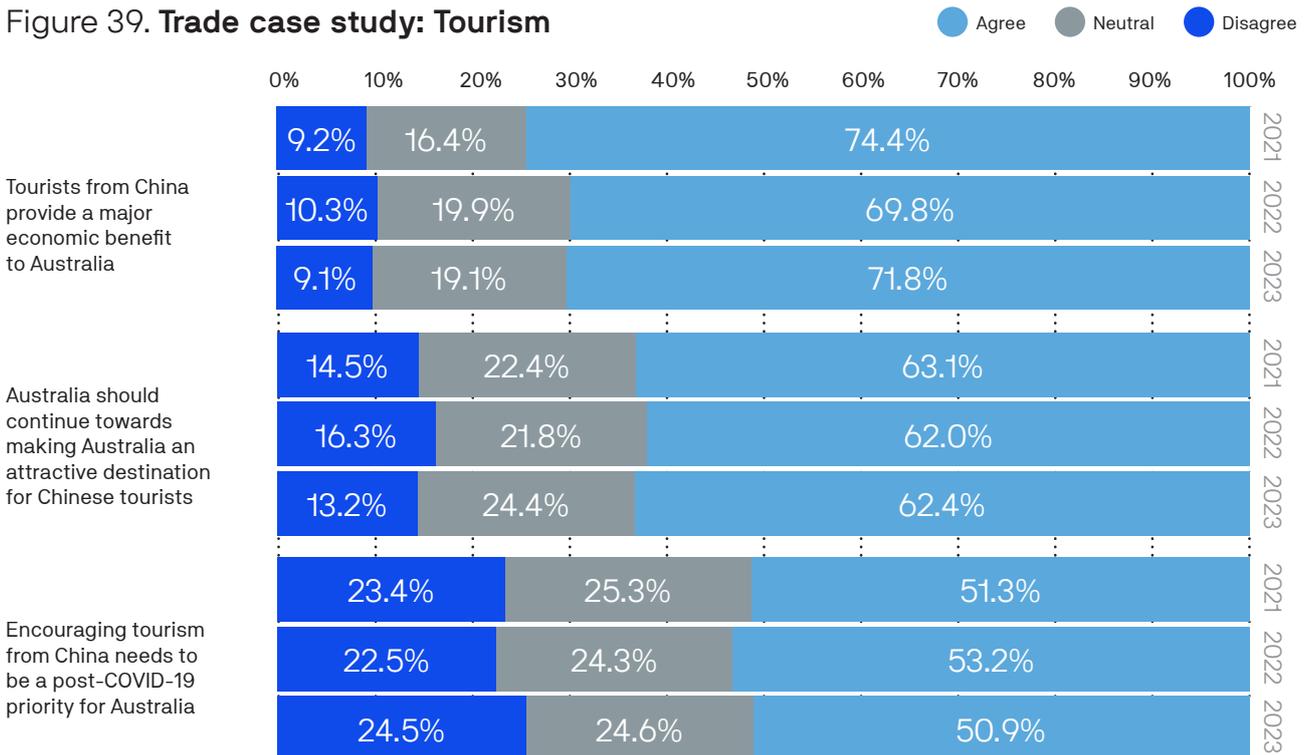
A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (71 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (56 percent) are less likely to agree.

‘Encouraging tourism from China needs to be a post-COVID-19 priority for Australia’

Just over half of Australians agree (51 percent), a general continuation of views from 2022 (53 percent) and 2021 (51 percent). Twenty-five percent express neutrality and 25 percent disagree (Figure 39).

A state/territory divide: Victoria residents (43 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 39. Trade case study: Tourism



5.5 Trade case study: Education

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

Sixty-nine percent of Australians agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (67 percent), down from the high of 76 percent in 2021. Twenty-one percent express neutrality and 10 percent disagree (Figure 40).

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

More than three-quarters of Australians (77 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (75 percent), down from the high of 81 percent in 2021. Seventeen percent express neutrality and six percent disagree (Figure 40).

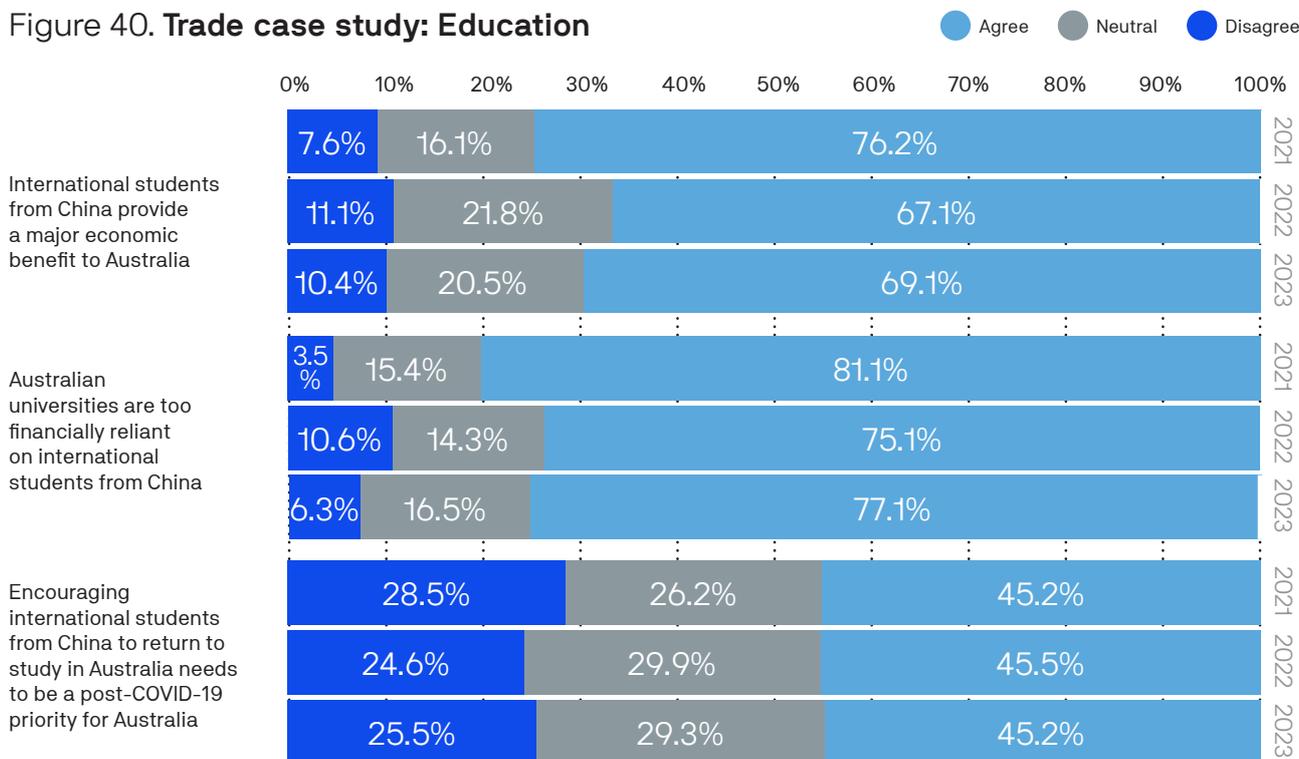
An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (84 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (73 percent) are less likely to agree.

‘Encouraging international students from China to return to study in Australia needs to be a post-COVID-19 priority for Australia’

Forty-five percent of Australians agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (46 percent) and 2021 (45 percent). Twenty-nine percent express neutrality and 26 percent disagree (Figure 40).

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (55 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree.

Figure 40. Trade case study: Education



5.6 Foreign investment

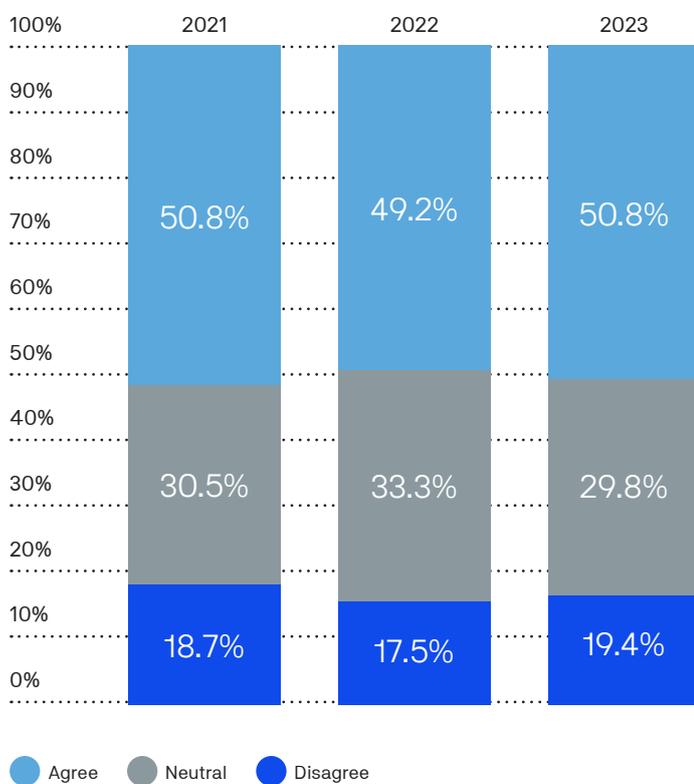
‘Foreign investment from China is more detrimental than beneficial to Australia’

Just over half of Australians (51 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (49 percent) and 2021 (51 percent). Thirty percent express neutrality and nineteen percent disagree (Figure 41).

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

Figure 41. **Foreign investment from China: Detrimental or beneficial?**

Foreign investment from China is more detrimental than beneficial to Australia

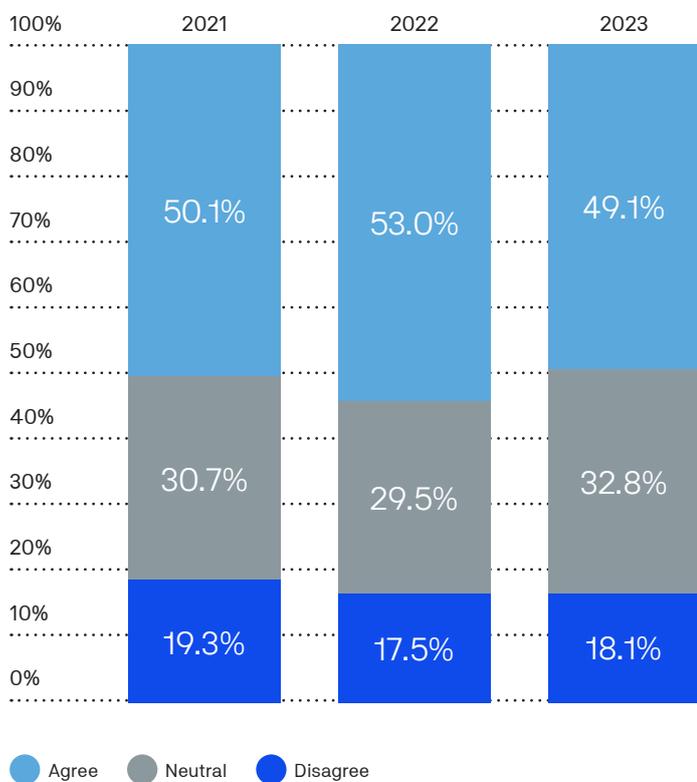


‘Foreign investment from China has created job opportunities in Australia’

About half of Australians (49 percent) agree, a four-point decrease from 2022 (53 percent). Thirty-three percent express neutrality and 18 percent disagree (Figure 42).

Figure 42. **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 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’

About two-thirds of Australians (64 percent) agree. This is a four-point increase from 2022 (60 percent). Twenty-five percent express neutrality and 11 percent disagree (Figure 43).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (71 percent) are more likely to agree.

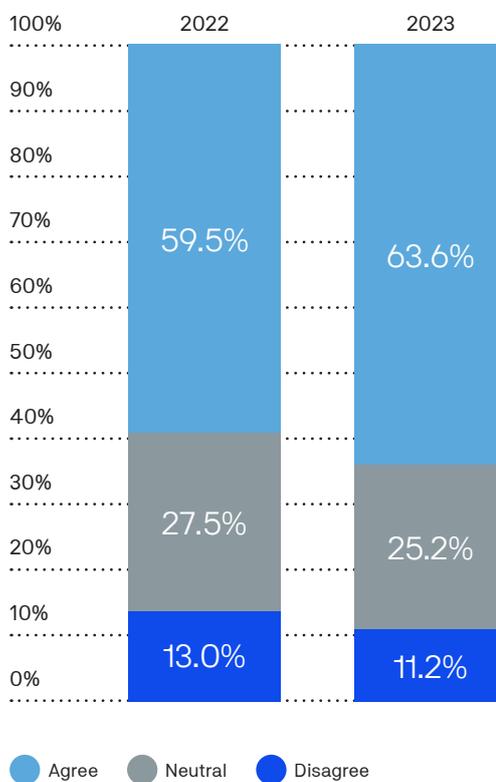
A state/territory divide: Western Australia residents (50 percent) and Victoria residents (46 percent) are less likely to agree.

An education divide: Those who completed a certificate, trade or diploma (72 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (70 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree.

Figure 43. Investment case study: 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



5.8 Investment case study: Critical minerals

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

Nearly three-quarters of Australians (73 percent) agree. Nineteen percent express neutrality and nine percent disagree (Figure 44).

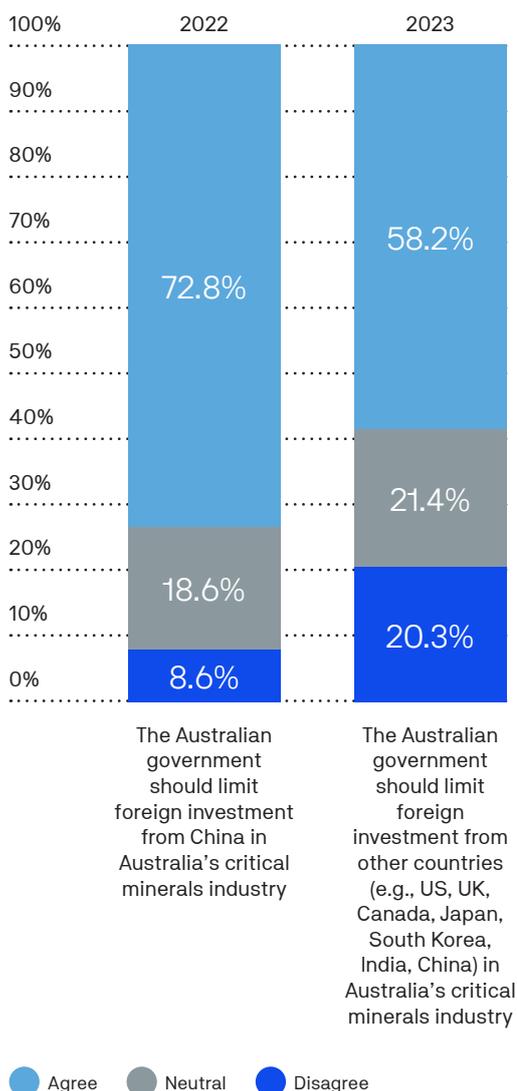
An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (84 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (59 percent) are less likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** South Australia residents (90 percent) and Queensland residents (81 percent) are more likely to agree. Western Australia residents (52 percent) are less likely to agree.

‘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’

Fifty-eight percent of Australians agree. Twenty-one percent express neutrality and 20 percent disagree (Figure 44).

A state/territory divide: South Australia residents (73 percent) are more likely to agree. Western Australia residents (43 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 44. Investment case study: Critical minerals



5.9 Investment case study: Agriculture

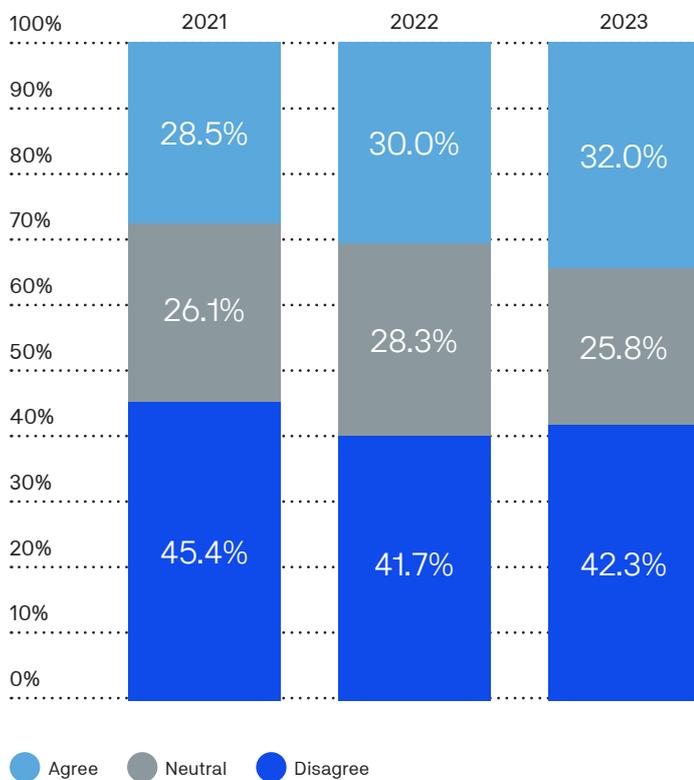
‘Chinese investment in agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia is more beneficial than detrimental to Australia’s interests’

Thirty-two percent of Australians agree, a two-point increase from 2022 (30 percent) and a three-point increase from 2021 (29 percent). Twenty-six percent express neutrality and 42 percent disagree (Figure 45).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18-34 (36 percent) are more likely to agree. Older Australians aged 55+ (24 percent) are less likely to agree. **An education divide:** Those who completed a bachelor’s degree (39 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree.

Figure 45. 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’

About two-thirds of Australians (66 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (65 percent) and 2021 (65 percent). Twenty-two percent express neutrality and 12 percent disagree (Figure 46).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (73 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (60 percent) are less likely to agree.

A state/territory divide: Queensland residents (77 percent) are more likely to agree. **An education divide:** Those who completed high school (75 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (77 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree.

Figure 46. Investment case study: Agriculture – 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



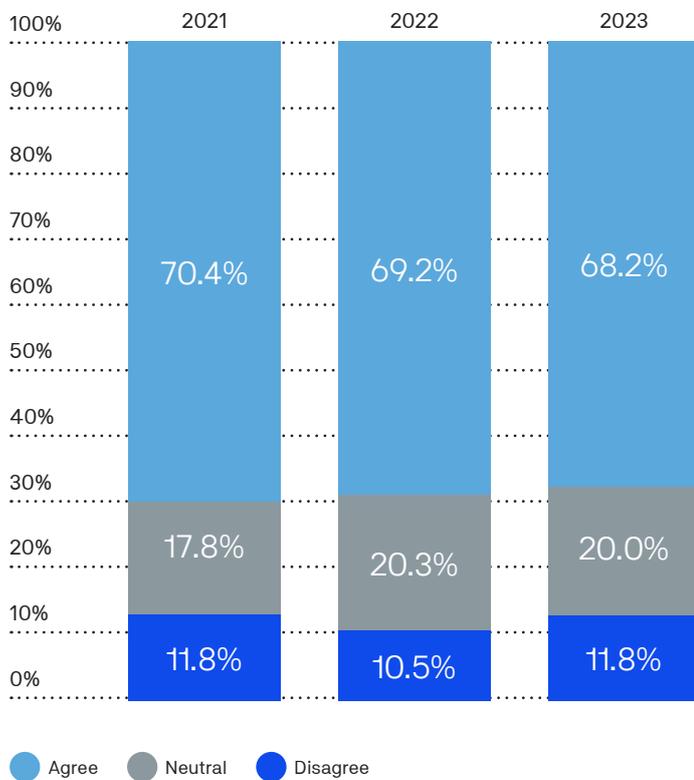
‘Chinese ownership of agricultural assets (e.g., land, food processing facilities) in Australia presents a threat to Australia’s food security’

Nearly seven in 10 Australians (68 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (69 percent) and 2021 (70 percent). Twenty percent express neutrality and 12 percent disagree (Figure 47).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (75 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (60 percent) are less likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** South Australia residents (77 percent) are more likely to agree. **An education divide:** Those who completed high school (72 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (77 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree.

Figure 47. 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)’

About one in three Australians (29 percent) agree, a four-point drop from 2022 (33 percent) and 2021 (33 percent). Thirty percent express neutrality and 41 percent disagree (Figure 48).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18-34 (37 percent) are more likely to agree.

Figure 48. **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)

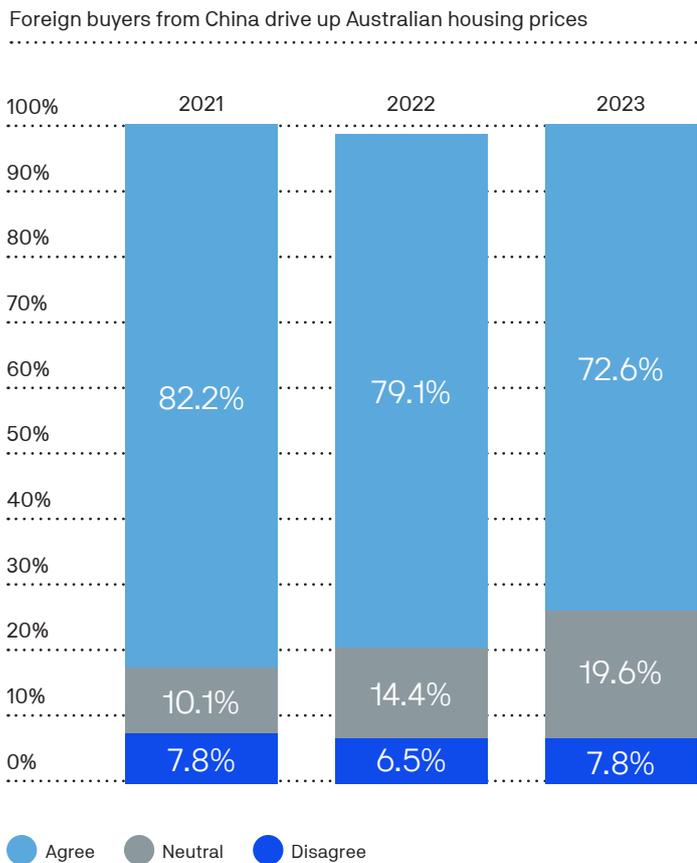


‘Foreign buyers from China drive up Australian housing prices’

Just over seven in 10 Australians (73 percent) agree, a six-point decrease from 2022 (79 percent) and a nine-point decrease from 2021 (82 percent). Twenty percent express neutrality and eight percent disagree (Figure 49).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (84 percent) are more likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** South Australia residents (83 percent) are more likely to agree.

Figure 49 **Investment case study:**
Residential real estate – Housing price pressure



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

Nearly seven in 10 Australians (68 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (69 percent) and 2021 (69 percent). Twenty-two percent express neutrality and 10 percent disagree (Figure 50).

A state/territory divide: New South Wales residents (84 percent) are more likely to agree.

Figure 50. Investment case study: Residential real estate – Rental market pressure

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



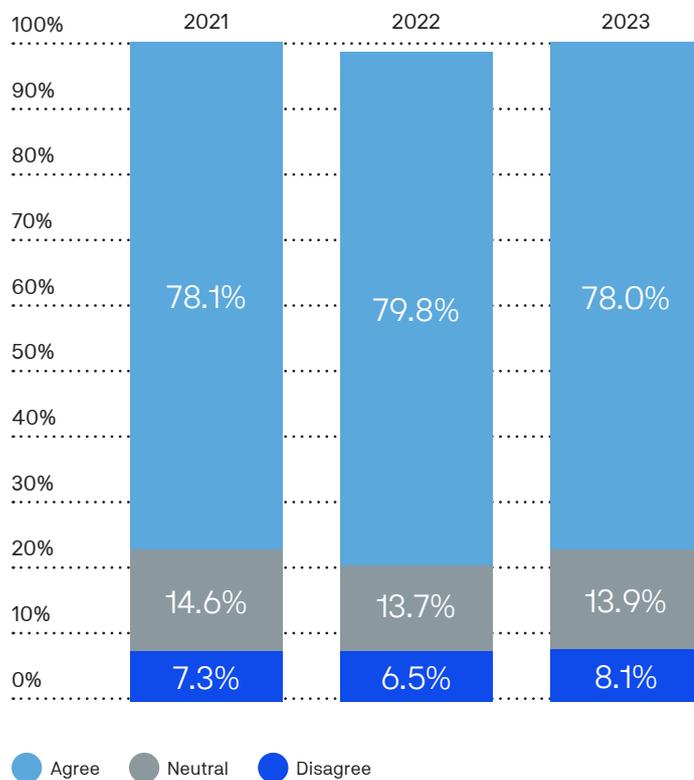
‘Australia should restrict the amount of investment in residential real estate that is permitted from Chinese investors’

Nearly eight in 10 Australians (78 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (80 percent) and 2021 (78 percent). Fourteen percent express neutrality and eight percent disagree (Figure 51).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (88 percent) are more likely to agree. Younger Australians aged 18-34 (69 percent) are less likely to agree. **An education divide:** Those who completed a certificate, trade or diploma (85 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** Victoria residents (88 percent) are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (84 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree.

Figure 51. **Investment case study: Residential real estate – 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’

Just over six in 10 Australians (63 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (61 percent) and 2021 (61 percent). Twenty-three percent express neutrality and 14 percent disagree (Figure 52).

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (69 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree.

Figure 52. 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-three percent of Australians agree, a six-point decrease from 2022 (49 percent) and a return to levels of concern in 2021 (43 percent). Twenty-eight percent express neutrality and 29 percent disagree (Figure 53).

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (26 percent) are less likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (54 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Australian Labor Party (34 percent) are less likely to agree.

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

Just over four in ten Australians (42 percent) agree, a continuation of views from 2022 (42 percent) and 2021 (42 percent). Thirty-one percent express neutrality and 28 percent disagree (Figure 53).

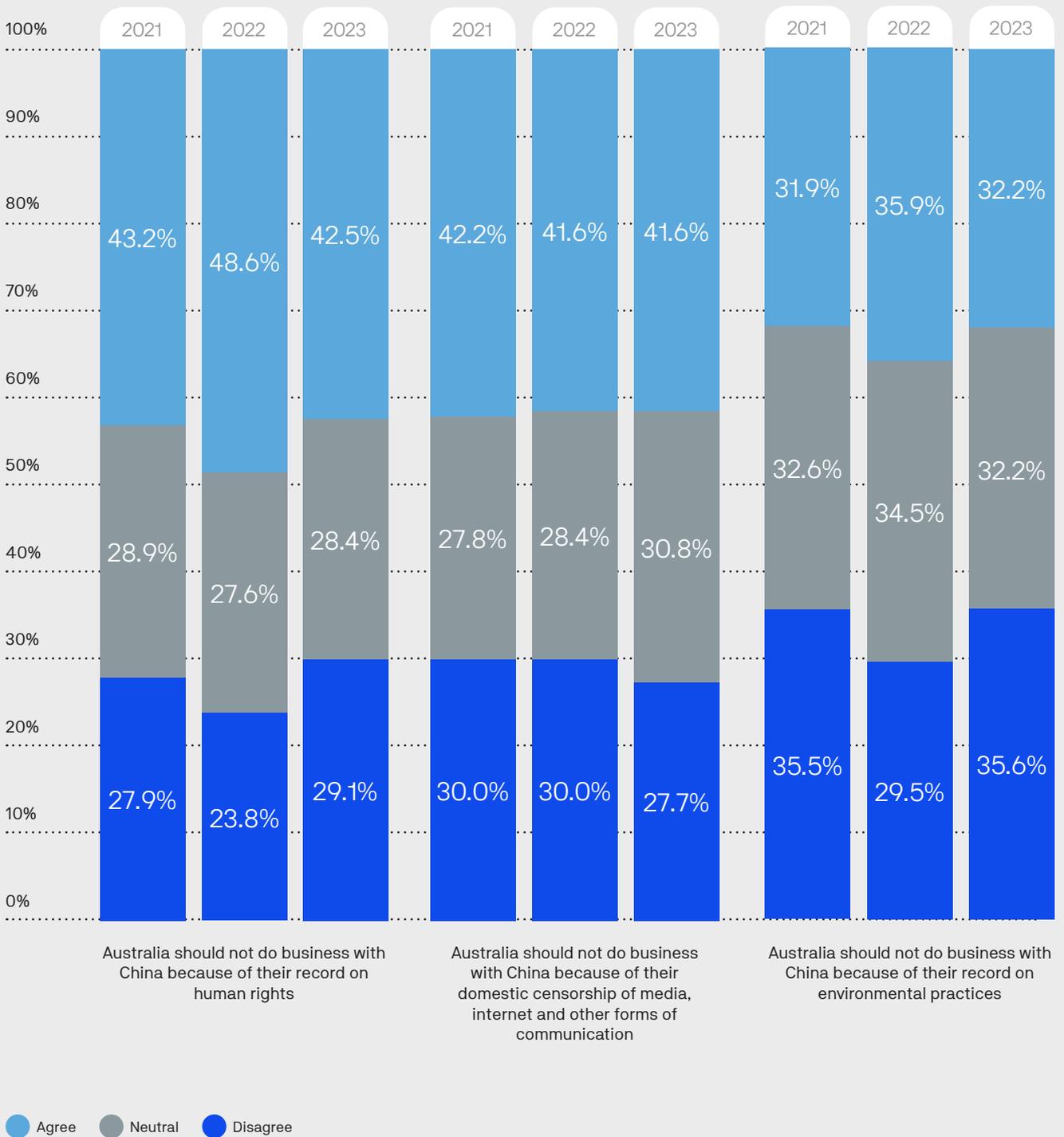
A state/territory divide: New South Wales residents (49 percent) are more likely to agree.

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

About one-third of Australians agree (32 percent), a four-point decrease from 2022 (36 percent) and a return to levels of concern in 2021 (32 percent). Thirty-two percent express neutrality and 36 percent disagree (Figure 53).

An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18-34 (44 percent) are more likely to agree. **A state/territory divide:** Western Australia residents (22 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 53. Concerns about business ties



6. Society

6.1 Background

Discussions on foreign influence and interference, with a focus on China as a major source country, are regaining prominence.

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) Director-General Mike Burgess in his annual national threat assessment in February stated that ‘more Australians are being targeted for espionage and foreign interference than at any time in Australia’s history’.⁸⁴

Home Affairs Minister Clare O’Neil noted that ‘This is not just a China problem, although it is a China problem.’⁸⁵ And at the time of writing, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCS) is conducting a review into ‘the operation, effectiveness and implications of the provisions’ of the *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018*.⁸⁶ In testimony to a public hearing as part of the review, former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull told the inquiry that the ‘most active state and political party seeking to influence public affairs in Australia is that of China and the Communist Party of China’.⁸⁷

In April this year, a Sydney businessperson was arrested and charged with one count of reckless foreign interference, the second person to be charged with violating Australia’s foreign interference laws since legislation was passed in 2018.⁸⁸

Two Australian citizens remain in detention in China on national security grounds. Both are yet to receive a verdict following closed trials, with their sentencing continuously postponed. Yang Hengjun, detained since January 19 2019, faced a closed trial in Beijing two years ago. Cheng Lei marked 1000 days in detention on May 9 2023, having faced trial in March last year. The Australian government has said that their cases are the ‘highest priorities’⁸⁹ and ensured steady public reference is made to their incarceration,⁹⁰ repeatedly raising their cases in discussions with Chinese counterparts.⁹¹

At the end of August the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released a report on the situation in Xinjiang which found that ‘serious human rights violations have been committed in the context of the [PRC] government’s

application of counter-terrorism and counter-‘extremism’ strategies.’⁹² While the Australian government has continuously expressed its concern over human rights abuses in Xinjiang,⁹³ they have stopped short of implementing targeted sanctions under Australia’s Autonomous Sanctions Regime on Chinese officials and companies involved in such abuses. The Opposition has called on the Australian government to consider such sanctions.⁹⁴

Beijing in January this year announced a ban on online learning at overseas universities, requiring all students to continue their studies on-campus in order for their degrees to be recognised.⁹⁵ Australia welcomed a return of international students from China from February onwards.



6.2 The Australian-Chinese community

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

Fifty-six percent of Australians agree, a steady decrease from 2022 (59 percent) and 2021 (63 percent). Thirty-four percent express neutrality and 11 percent disagree (Figure 54).

Figure 54. **Impact of political tensions on the Australian-Chinese community**

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



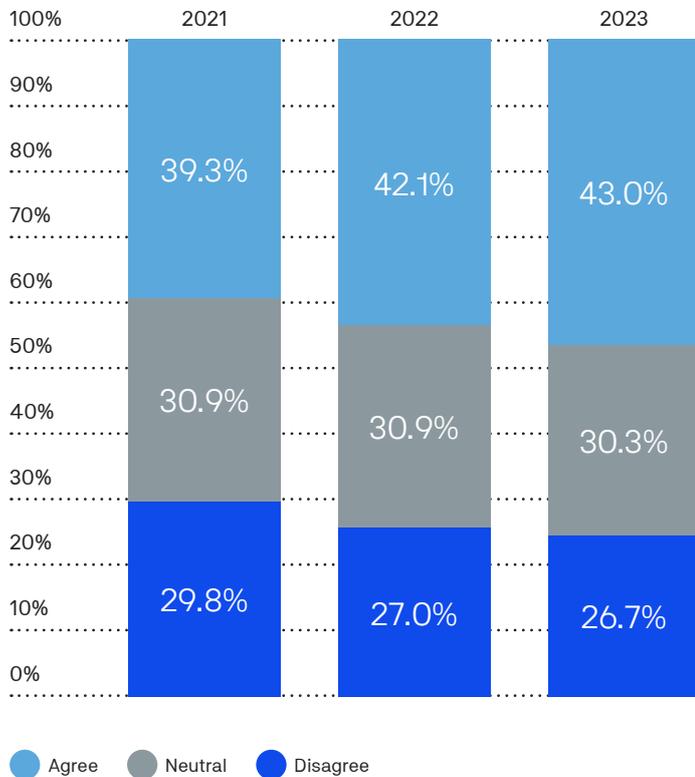
‘Australians of Chinese origin can be mobilised by the Chinese government to undermine Australia’s interests and social cohesion’

Forty-three percent of Australians agree, a slight increase from 2022 (42 percent) and 2021 (39 percent). Thirty percent express neutrality and 27 percent disagree (Figure 55).

An education divide: Those who completed high school (52 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (56 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Australian Labor Party (36 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 55. **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 Interference and influence

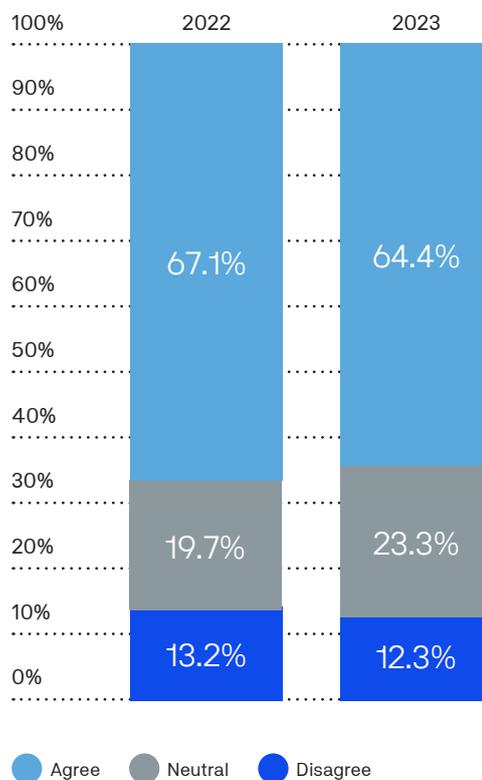
'Foreign interference in Australia stemming from China is more concerning than foreign interference from other countries'

Sixty-four percent of Australians agree, a three-point decrease from 2022 (67 percent). Twenty-three percent express neutrality and 12 percent disagree (Figure 56).

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (79 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree.

Figure 56. **Foreign interference stemming from China**

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’

Sixty-four percent of Australians agree, a steady decrease over the last three years, five points down from 2022 (69 percent) and eight points down from 2021 (72 percent). Twenty-seven percent express neutrality and nine percent disagree (Figure 57).

An age divide: Older Australians aged 55+ (76 percent) are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (78 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate a minority party (49 percent) are less likely to agree.

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

Forty-three percent of Australians agree, a slow increase over the last three years, three points up from 2022 (39 percent) and six points up from 2021 (37 percent). Thirty-four percent express neutrality and 23 percent disagree (Figure 57).

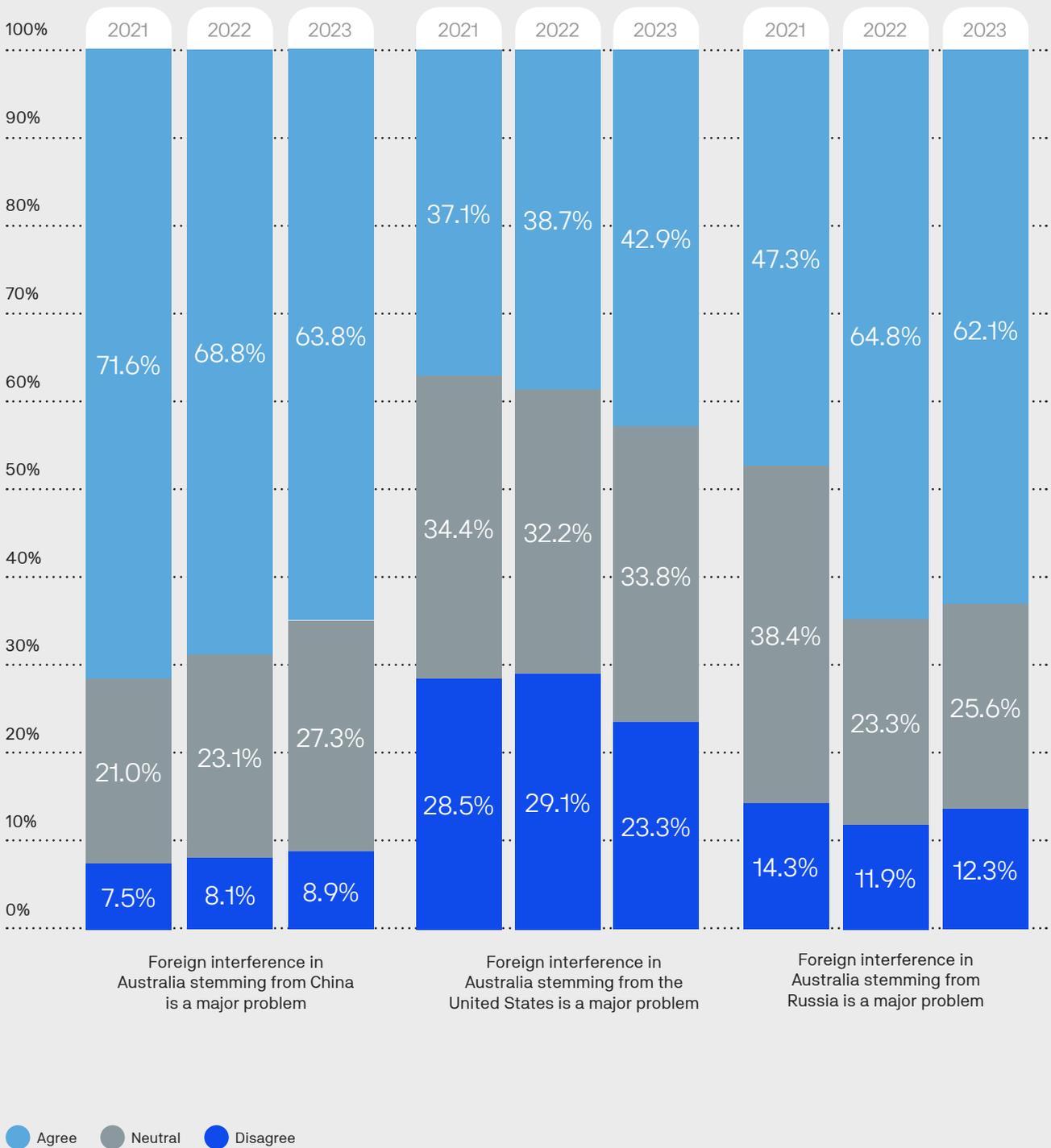
A political divide: Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (32 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are less likely to agree.

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

About six in 10 Australians (62 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (65 percent). Twenty-six percent express neutrality and 12 percent disagree (Figure 57).

A state/territory divide: Queensland residents (48 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 57. Foreign interference – Country comparisons



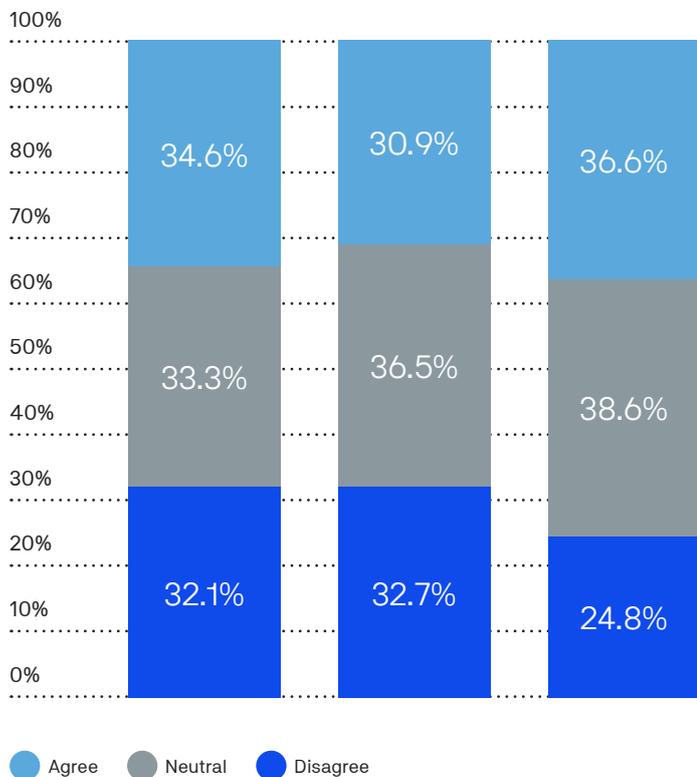
‘The Australian government is successfully responding to Chinese government interference in Australia’

Thirty-seven percent of Australians agree, a six-point increase from 2022 (31 percent). Thirty-nine percent express neutrality and 25 percent disagree (Figure 58).

A state/territory divide: New South Wales residents (49 percent) and Western Australia residents (43 percent) are more likely to agree. Queensland residents (17 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 58. **The Australian government’s response to Chinese government interference in Australia**

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



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

Nearly half of Australians (48 percent) agree, a steady continuation of views expressed in 2022 (48 percent). Twenty-seven percent express neutrality and 25 percent disagree (Figure 59).

An education divide: Those who completed high school (54 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree. Those who completed a bachelor’s degree (39 percent) are less likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (67 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Australian Labor Party (40 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 59. **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’

Sixty-eight percent of Australians agree, a three-point increase from 2022 (65 percent). Twenty percent express neutrality and 11 percent disagree (Figure 60).

Figure 60. **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



6.5 Arbitrary detention

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

Seven in 10 Australians (72 percent) agree, a six-point increase from 2022 (66 percent), a return to 2021 levels of concern (72 percent). Twenty percent express neutrality and eight percent disagree (Figure 61).

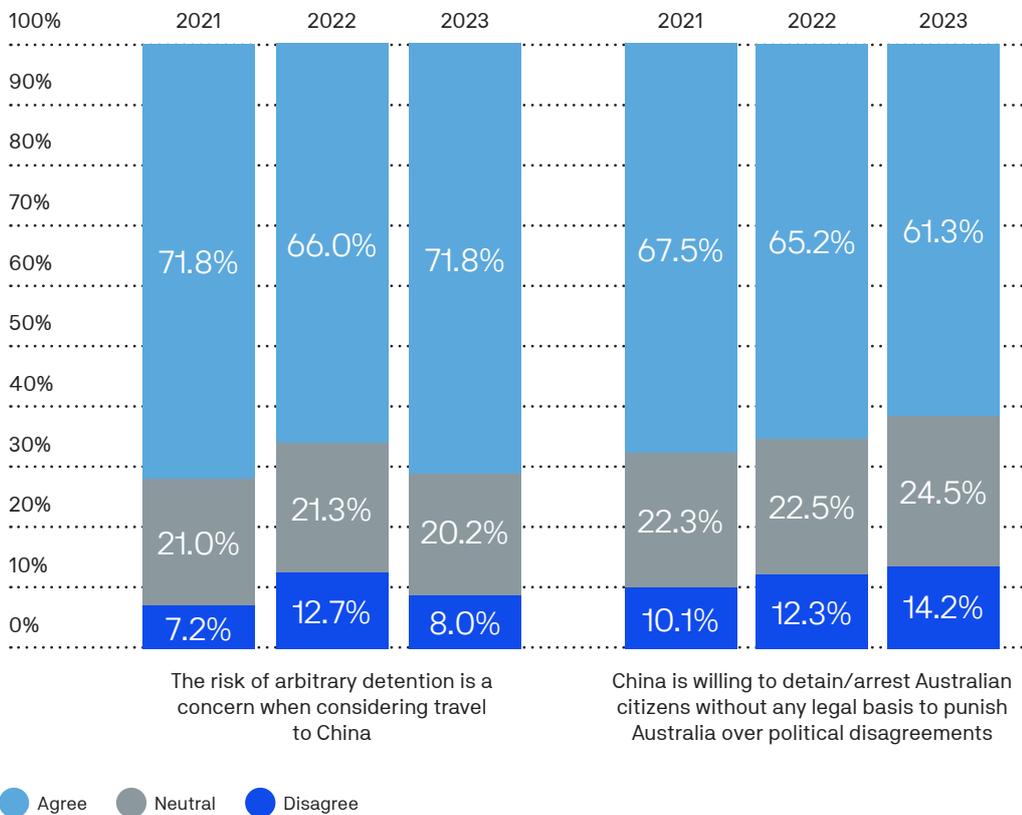
An age divide: Younger Australians aged 18-34 (63 percent) are less likely to agree.

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

About six in 10 Australians (61 percent) agree, a four-point decrease from 2022 (65 percent). Twenty-five percent express neutrality and 14 percent disagree (Figure 61).

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (81 percent) are more likely to agree.

Figure 61. Arbitrary detention



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-five percent of Australians agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (54 percent), down from the high of 58 percent in 2021. Twenty-nine percent express neutrality and 16 percent disagree (Figure 62).

A state/territory divide: Australian Capital Territory residents (69 percent) are more likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (65 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (44 percent) are less likely to agree.

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

Just over one-third of Australians (35 percent) agree, a three-point increase from 2022 (32 percent) but still down from the high of 2021 (40 percent).

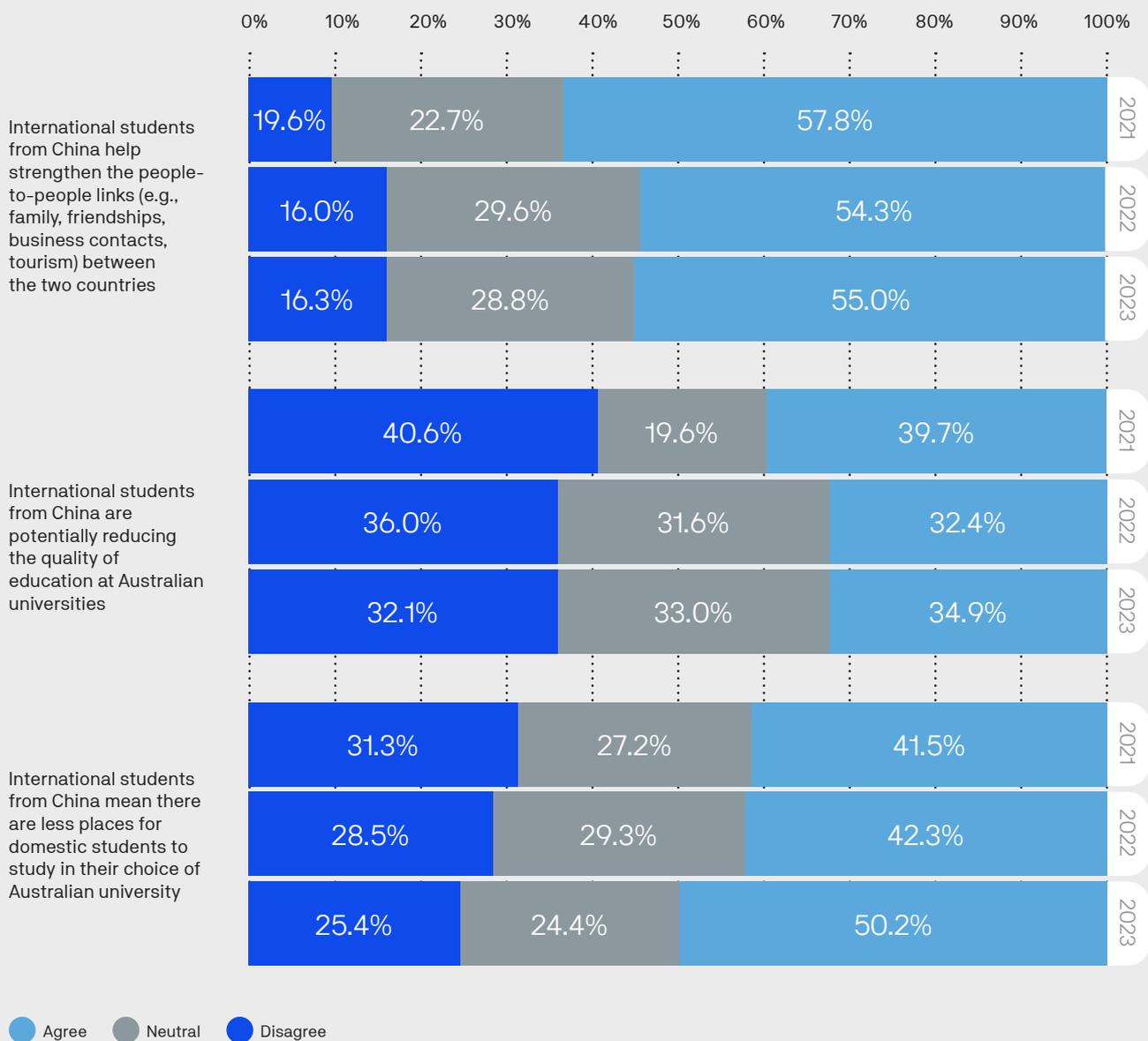
Thirty-three percent express neutrality and 32 percent disagree (Figure 62).

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

Half of Australians (50 percent) agree an eight-point increase from 2022 (42 percent) and 2021 (42 percent). Twenty-four percent express neutrality and 25 percent disagree (Figure 62).

A state/territory divide: Western Australia residents (31 percent) are less likely to agree. **An education divide:** Those who completed a certificate, trade or diploma (61 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree. Those who completed a bachelor’s degree (44 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 62. Views on international students



7. University and research

7.1 Background

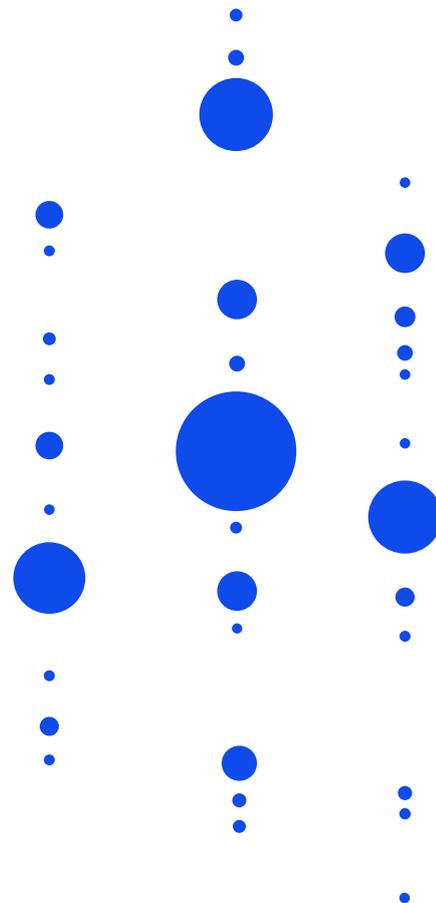
In February this year, the Australian government tabled its response⁹⁶ to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security's March 2022 report on foreign interference risks affecting the Australian higher education and research sector.⁹⁷ The government stated that the higher education sector 'faces significant foreign interference risks'. It said the government 'remains concerned about potential risks to academic freedom through some foreign arrangements at universities', making an undertaking to 'keep these arrangements under review.'⁹⁸

There has been some scrutiny over teaching collaborations between Australian universities and Chinese universities on cyber security courses, with calls from some quarters for tighter regulation, including around PhD research.⁹⁹

The *Times Higher Education* last year reported that Australian academics were engaging in self-censorship on China-related projects and projects involving Chinese partners, opting not to undertake or participate in such initiatives.¹⁰⁰ It has also been documented by Human Rights Watch that Australian lecturers 'perceived to be critical of the Chinese Communist Party or discuss 'sensitive' issues such as Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong, or Xinjiang' and international students from China who have criticised the Chinese Communist Party, expressed support for democracy in China or Hong Kong, or attended a protest in support of Hong Kong democracy have been subject to threats, harassment and surveillance by the Chinese government and some of its supporters. These lecturers and students have also adopted self-censorship in order not to be targeted.¹⁰¹

There remains some limited support for continuing Australia-China research partnerships through, for example, the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations and Australia-China Science and Research Fund Joint Research Centres.¹⁰² A government-supported initiative by the Australian Academy of Science created a video series last year demonstrating 'how longstanding scientific relationships between Australia and China are advancing science', including in the creation of sustainable energy, feeding the world and improving chronic disease outcomes.¹⁰³

A review of the Australian Research Council (ARC), the primary non-medical research funding agency of the Australian Government, recently put forward a proposal to limit political power of veto over grant-awarding decisions of the Australian Research Council.¹⁰⁴ The former Coalition government had in 2021 exercised ministerial power of veto to reject six ARC-endorsed grants, which included several China-related projects.¹⁰⁵



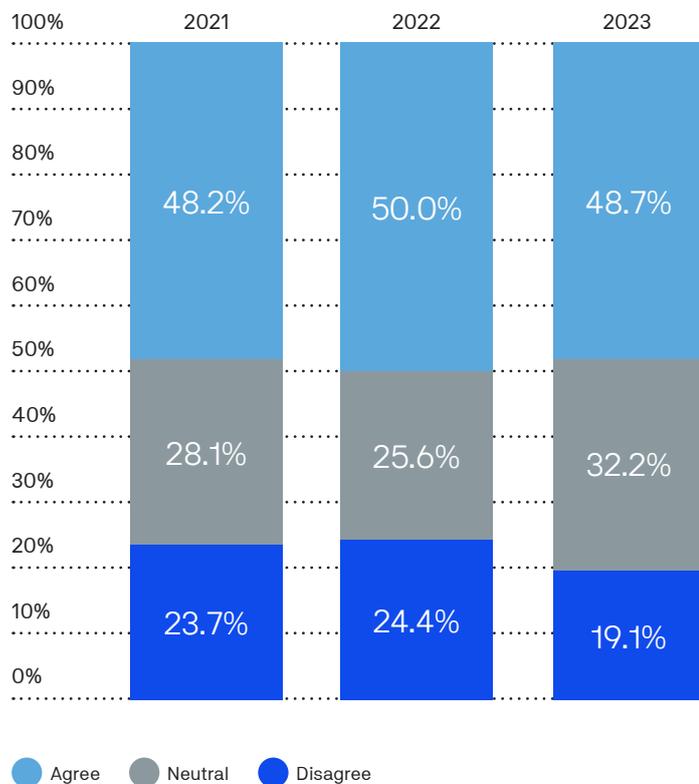
7.2 Freedom of academic speech

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

Forty-nine percent of Australians agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (50 percent) and 2021 (48 percent). Thirty-two percent express neutrality and 19 percent disagree (Figure 63).

Figure 63. **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’

About six in 10 Australians (61 percent) agree, a continuation of views from 2022 (61 percent). Twenty-seven percent express neutrality and 12 percent disagree (Figure 64).

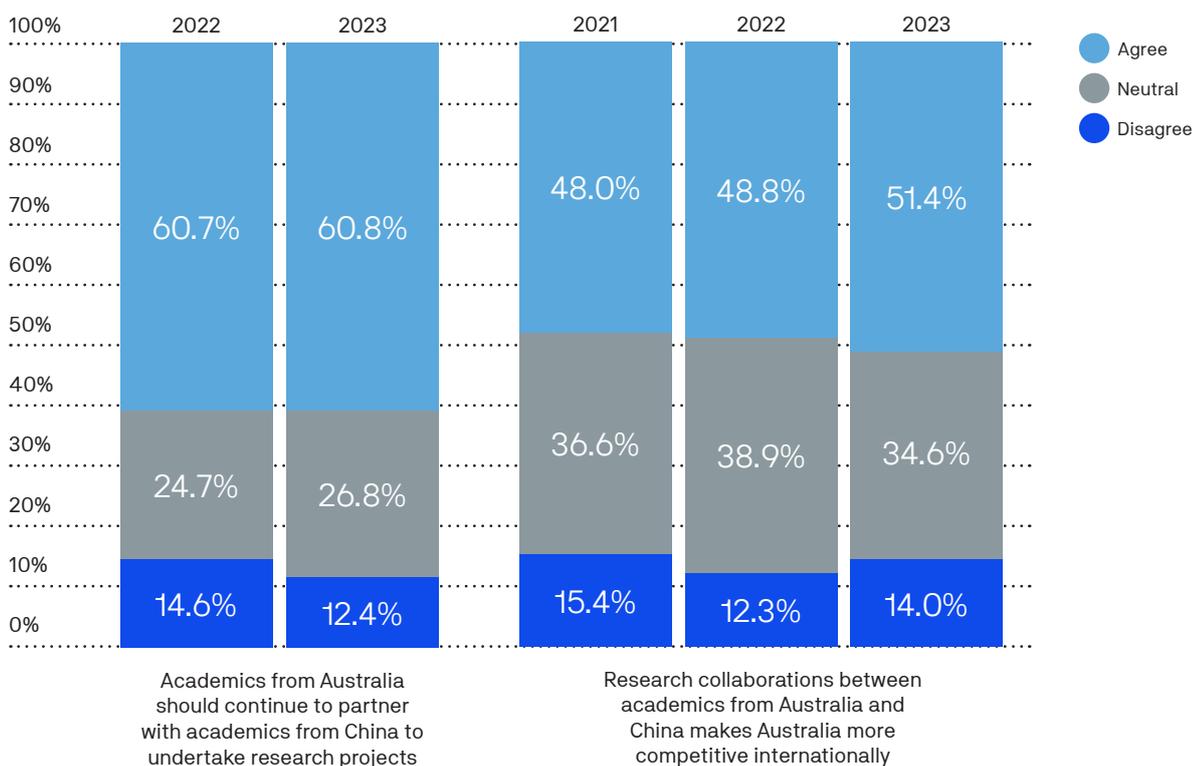
An education divide: Those who completed a bachelor’s degree (69 percent) as their highest level of education are more likely to agree.

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (70 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (51 percent) are less likely to agree.

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

Just over half of Australians (51 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (49 percent) and 2021 (48 percent). Thirty-five percent express neutrality and 14 percent disagree (Figure 64).

Figure 64. Research collaboration – General



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

About two-thirds of Australians (68 percent) agree, a five-point increase from 2022 (63 percent) and a return to levels of support in 2021 (68 percent). Twenty-one percent express neutrality and 11 percent disagree (Figure 65).

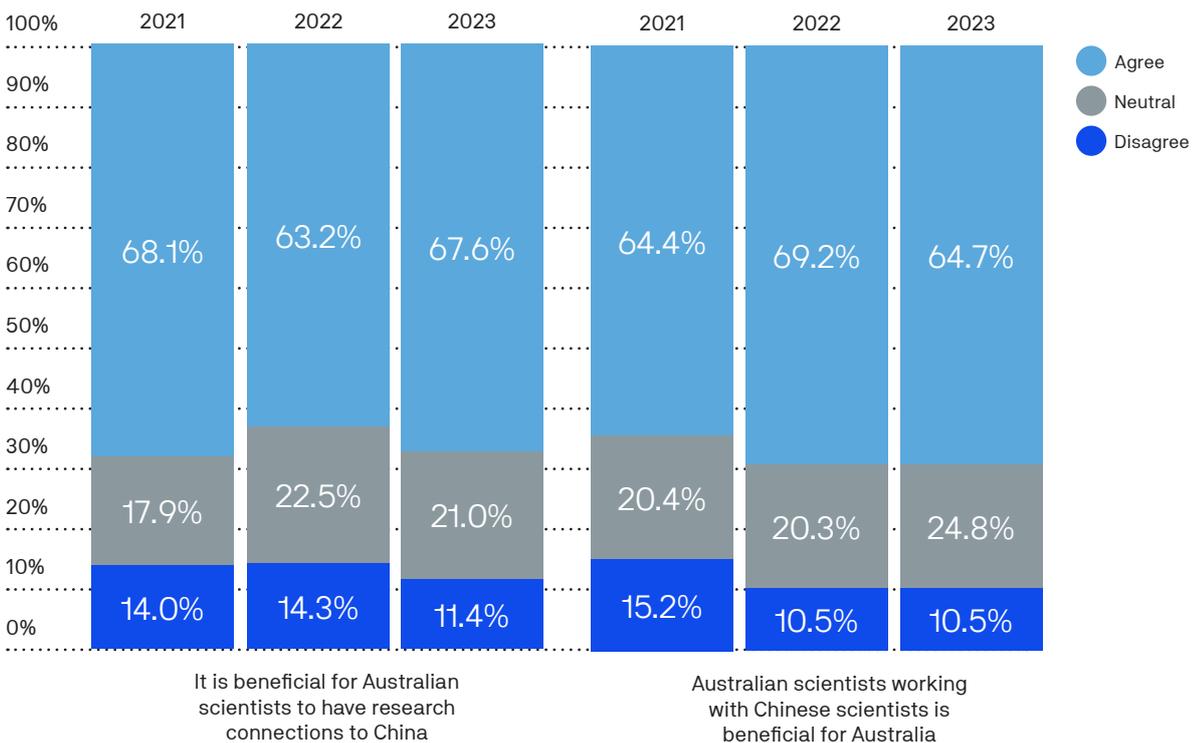
A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (79 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (62 percent) or a minority party (50 percent) are less likely to agree.

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

Sixty-five percent of Australians agree, a four-point decrease from 2022 (69 percent) and a return to levels of support in 2021 (64 percent). Twenty-five percent express neutrality and 11 percent disagree (Figure 65).

A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (74 percent) as best placed to handle Australia’s China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (60 percent) or a minority party (52 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 65. Research collaboration – Science



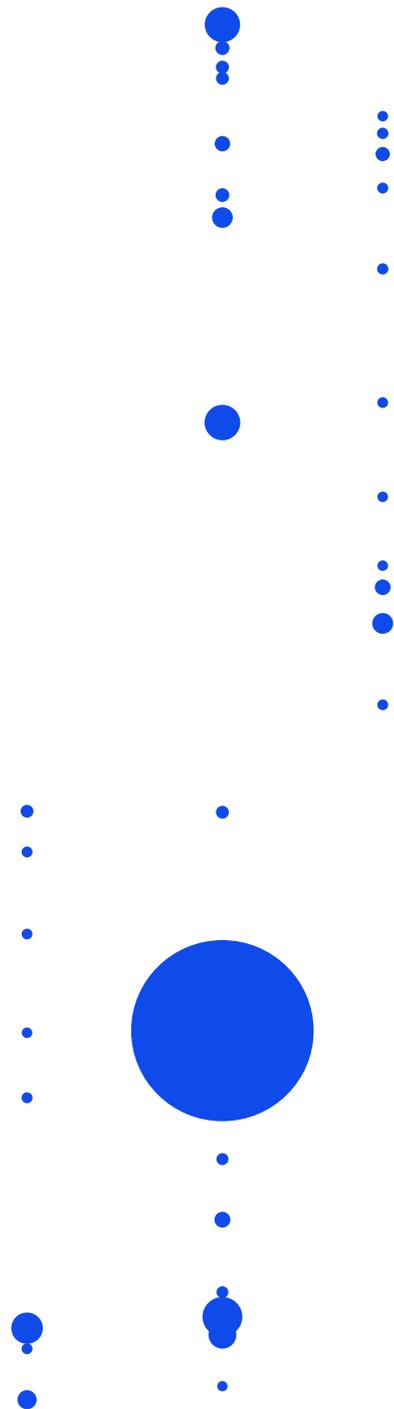
8. Global and regional cooperation

8.1 Background

Despite the ongoing challenges in the relationship, renewed dialogue has seen tentative exploration of potential areas of cooperation between Australia and China. Prime Minister Albanese has emphasised that Australia looked to ‘cooperate with China wherever we can’.¹⁰⁶

During an event marking the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the nations, Australian Ambassador to the PRC Graham Fletcher outlined areas in which Australia and China could cooperate, stating there was ‘scope for collaboration at the policy level, for research and innovation, and also for commercial partnerships’ in areas such as ‘renewable energy, the transition to a low carbon economy and public health, including lessons from the pandemic’.¹⁰⁷

Pacific Minister Conroy had indicated that Australia was ‘open to partnering’ with China ‘in supporting the development aspirations of the Pacific’, pointing out that ‘We partner, for example, in projects that go through the Asian Development Bank that might involve Australian finance, mixing with other people’s finance, developed by the Asian Development Bank and built by a Chinese company’.¹⁰⁸ The Foreign Minister noted that any such collaboration would need to ‘meet certain principles’, citing transparency, the priorities of the Pacific, equality and ‘no strings attached’. However, she said further that there was ‘nothing in contemplation on the infrastructure front at this time’.¹⁰⁹



8.2 Global and regional cooperation

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

Just over seven in 10 Australians (72 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (69 percent) and 2021 (74 percent). Eighteen percent express neutrality and 10 percent disagree (Figure 66).

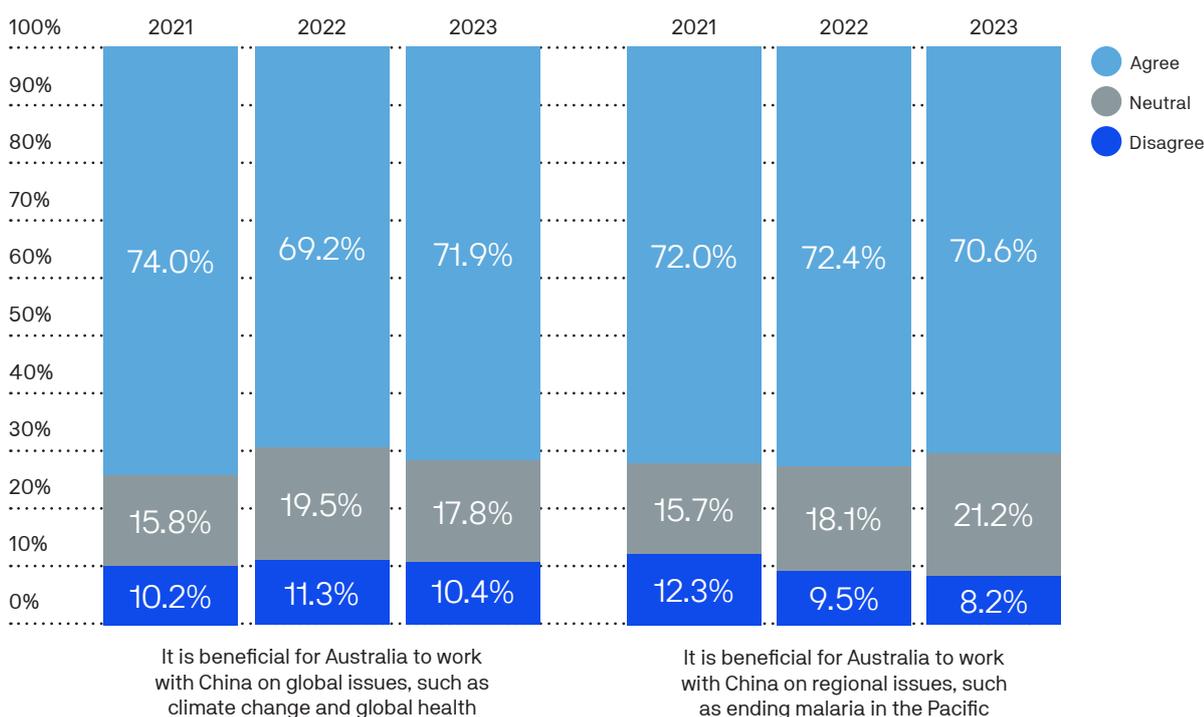
A political divide: Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (83 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (68 percent) or a minority party (55 percent) are less likely to agree.

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

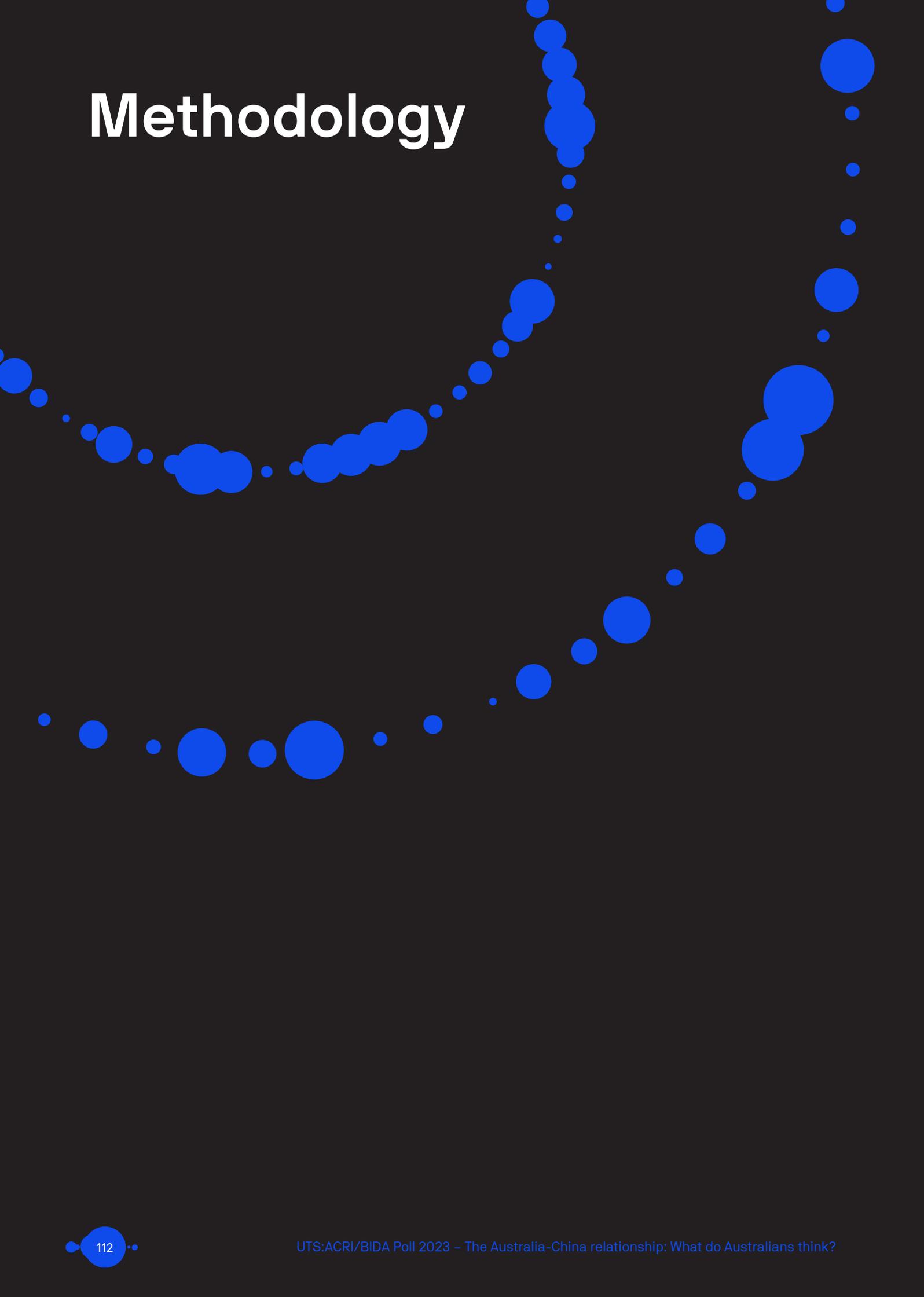
Just over seven in 10 Australians (71 percent) agree, a general continuation of views from 2022 (72 percent) and 2021 (72 percent). Twenty-one percent express neutrality and eight percent disagree (Figure 66).

A state/territory divide: Tasmania residents (57 percent) are less likely to agree. **A political divide:** Australians who nominate the Australian Labor Party (80 percent) as best placed to handle Australia's China policy are more likely to agree. Those who nominate the Liberal/Nationals (70 percent) or a minority party (51 percent) are less likely to agree.

Figure 66. Benefits of global and regional cooperation



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, Northern Territory, Western Australia, and South Australia, a minimum of 300 from Victoria and Queensland, and 400 from New South Wales. The total sample size consisted of 2000 complete responses. Responses were collected between April 3 2023 and April 11 2023. The median response time was 19.6 minutes.

Instrument

The survey consisted of several parts:

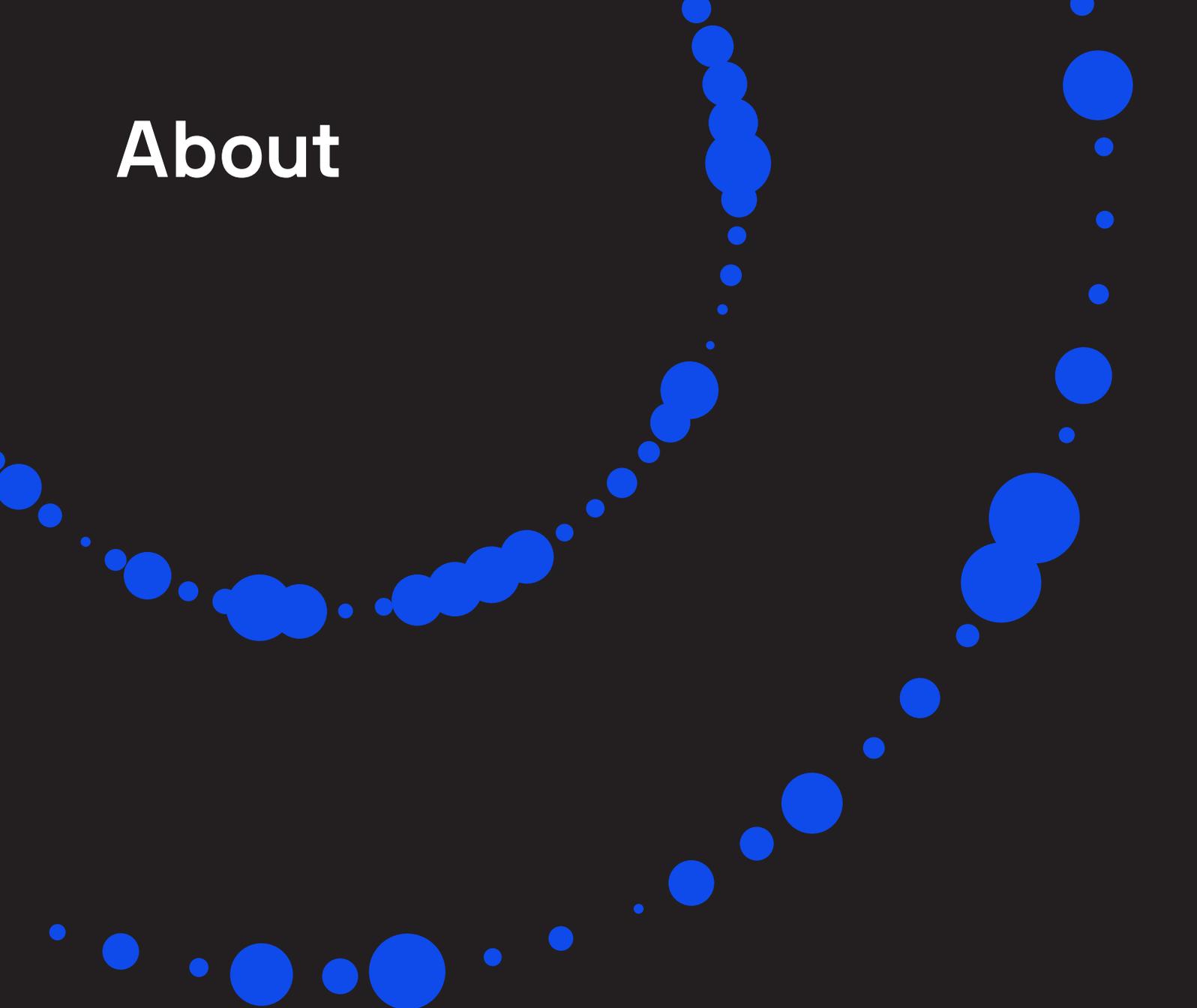
1. Respondents were first provided background information and an invitation to participate.
2. Screening questions were performed on age, gender and location.
3. Respondents then provided their level of agreement in relation to their concerns and benefits of the Australia-China relationship and support 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 level of 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 19 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 back to the survey panel company's website to received credit for their completion.

Note: The poll instrument advised respondents that 'China' used throughout the poll referred to the People's Republic of China (PRC).

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) exceed 0.5 in all cases to establish convergent validity, whilst the resulting Cronbach Alpha's exceed 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



Elena Collinson

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

She is principal author of the *Australia-China monthly wrap-up* (previously the *Australia-China relations monthly summary*) launched in 2018. Her work has been published in *The National Interest*, *The Australian Financial Review*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Guardian*, the *South China Morning Post*, *The Diplomat*, *The Conversation*, *Australian Foreign Affairs*, the East Asia Forum, the Australian Institute of International Affairs' *Australian Outlook* and the Council on Foreign Relations' *Asia Unbound*, amongst other outlets, and she has contributed chapters to edited volumes. She is a lawyer admitted to the Supreme Court of New South Wales and has previously held research and project positions in Australian departmental, ministerial and Senate offices, at state and federal levels.

 @elenacollinson



Professor Paul F. Burke

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.

 @drpaulburke

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 BIDA, we specialise in finding new ways to build business intelligence through the capture, analysis and applications of data insights.

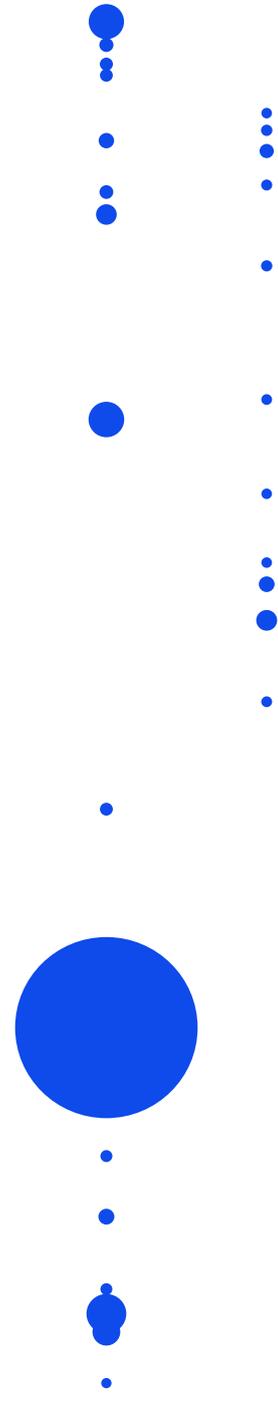
For businesses, our approach enables an in depth understanding of an organisation and provides actionable insights such as anticipating consumer behaviour, formulating optimal pricing models and strategies and boosting overall productivity of an organisation through better use of data.

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.

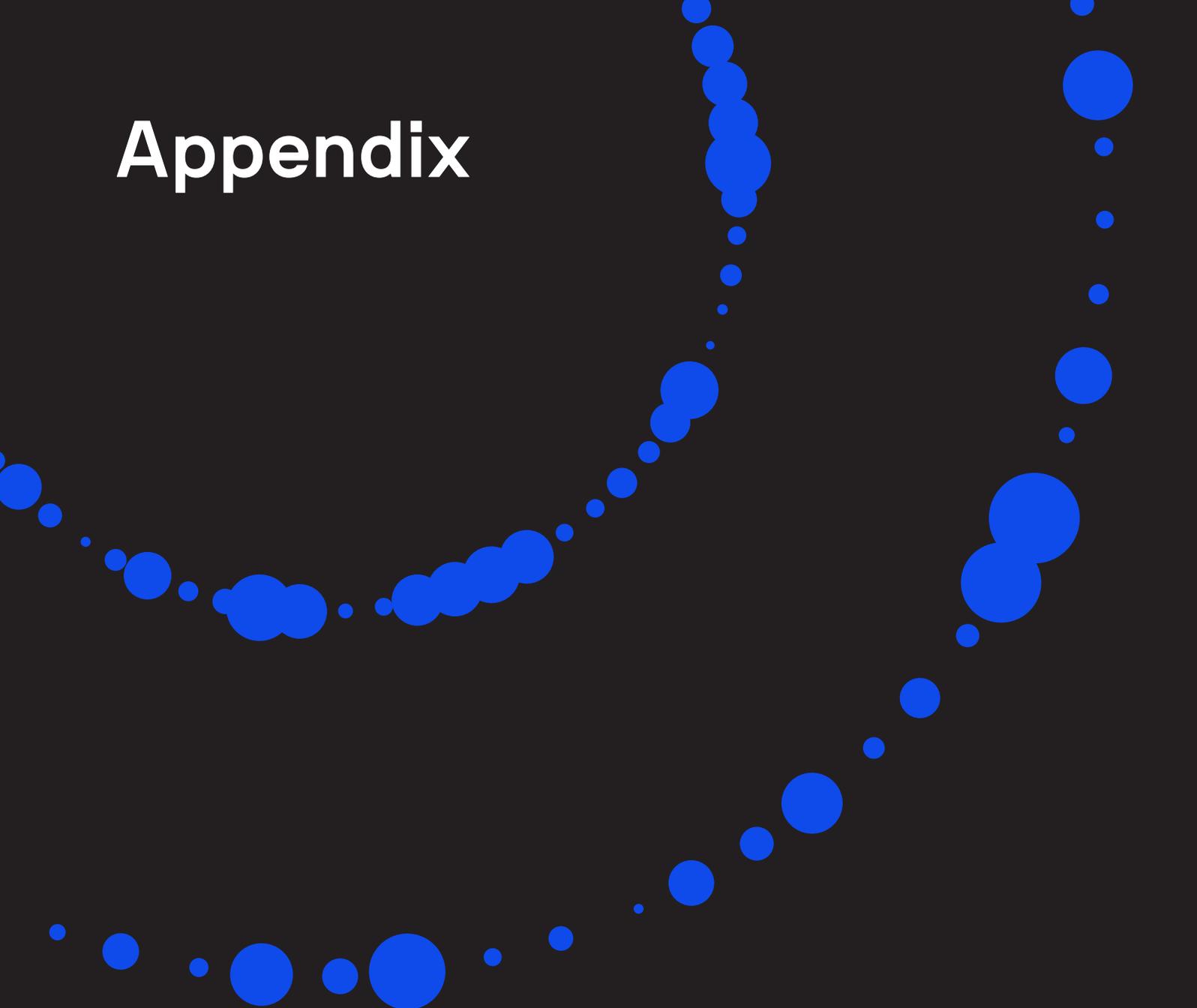
Through our research and collaborations we are developing theoretical and applied models, enabling organisations to be well informed, responsive and agile.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Amy Ma, Events and Communications Officer, at UTS:ACRI for assisting with project planning and proof-reading, Corey Lee Bell, Project and Research Officer at UTS:ACRI for proof-reading and Sylvia Weimer, Creative Director of Spacelab Design, 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, 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	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	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	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
2023 AVERAGE		3.4	3.3	7.2	24.8	30.4	22.4	8.5

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

	Impact on support overall	Importance (%)
Benefits of Australia's relationship with China	-0.02	1.14
Concerns about Australia's relationship with China	0.87	54.74
Satisfaction with the Australian government's management of China relations	0.19	11.88
Support for a harder Australian government line on China	-0.24	15.17
Mistrust of the Chinese government	-0.27	17.07

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	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	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	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	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
2023 AVERAGE		1.4	3.8	7.5	20.8	30.1	23.8	12.6

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	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	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	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	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
2023 AVERAGE		3.6	4.3	7.5	21.4	27.8	24.7	10.7

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	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	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	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	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	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
2023 AVERAGE		1.9	2.5	5.9	19.3	25.7	22.7	22.0

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	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	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	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
2023 AVERAGE		5.6	9.7	16	29.3	24.4	12.8	2.2

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	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	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	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
2023 AVERAGE		2.5	5.5	9.3	27.7	24.8	18.1	12.2

Table 9A 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	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	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	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 A 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	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 (%)

	Australian Labor Party	Liberal/Nationals	Greens	Other political party
Which political party is best placed to handle Australia's China policy?	48.8	28.5	8.9	13.9

Table 11A Australian government's management of China policy: Impact on vote in federal election (%)

	Yes	No	I don't know
Is the Australian government's management of China policy an issue that had an impact on your vote in the federal election that took place in 2022?	26.9	55.5	17.6

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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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	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 Support for the Australian government's ban on TikTok on Australian government devices (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Australia was right to ban the use of Chinese-owned app TikTok on phones used by Australian government employees	2023	1.1	2.3	4.0	16.9	13.7	21.7	40.3
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 24A Support for the Australian government's removal of Chinese-made surveillance equipment from Australian government buildings (%)

	Year	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The Australian government was right to remove Chinese-made surveillance equipment (e.g., security cameras) from Australian government buildings	2023	1.1	1.1	4.2	15.0	16.0	24.3	38.4
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 25A Publicly attributing 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	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 26A 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 right not to sign up to/participate in China's Belt and Road Initiative	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 27A 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	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 28A 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	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	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
The United States will eventually force Australia to choose between a close relationship with Washington or a close relationship with Beijing	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	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 29A 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	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 30A 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	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	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 31A **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	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 32A **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	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 33A **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	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 34A. 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	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 35A. 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	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 36A. 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	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 37A. 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	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 38A 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	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	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 39A Trade case study: Tourism (%)

	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	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
Australia should continue to work towards making Australia an attractive destination for Chinese tourists	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
Encouraging tourism from China needs to be a post-COVID-19 priority for Australia	2023	5.3	8.7	10.5	24.6	24.5	19.2	7.1
	2022	5.5	7.7	9.4	24.3	26.3	19.1	7.8
	2021	6.2	8.9	8.3	25.3	25.8	16.7	8.7

Table 40A Trade case study: Education (%)

	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	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
Australian universities are too financially reliant on international students from China	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
Encouraging international students from China to return to study in Australia needs to be a post-COVID-19 priority for Australia	2023	4.8	7.6	13.1	29.3	24.8	15.0	5.4
	2022	5.3	7.4	11.9	29.9	26.2	15.6	3.7
	2021	10.4	9.5	8.6	26.2	21.7	16.7	6.8

Table 41A 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	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 42A 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	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 43A Investment case study: Port of Darwin (%)

	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	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 44A Investment case study: Critical minerals (%)

	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 China in Australia's critical minerals industry	2023	0.5	2.2	5.8	18.6	17.9	25.9	29.0
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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	2023	3.5	6.8	10.1	21.4	19.6	21.6	17.0
	2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 45A 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	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 46A Investment case study: Agriculture – 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	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 47A 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	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 48A 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)	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 49A 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	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 50A 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	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 51A 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	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 52A 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	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 53A 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	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	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	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 54A. 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	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 55A. 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	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 56A. Foreign interference stemming from China (%)

	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	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 57A 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	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	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	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 58A. 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	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 59A. 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	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 60A. 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	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	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 61A. Arbitrary detention (%)

	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	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
China is willing to detain/arrest Australian citizens without any legal basis to punish Australia over political disagreements	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 62A Views on international students (%)

	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	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
International students from China are potentially reducing the quality of education at Australian universities	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
International students from China mean there are less places for domestic students to study in their choice of Australian university	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 63A. 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	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 64A. 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	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	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

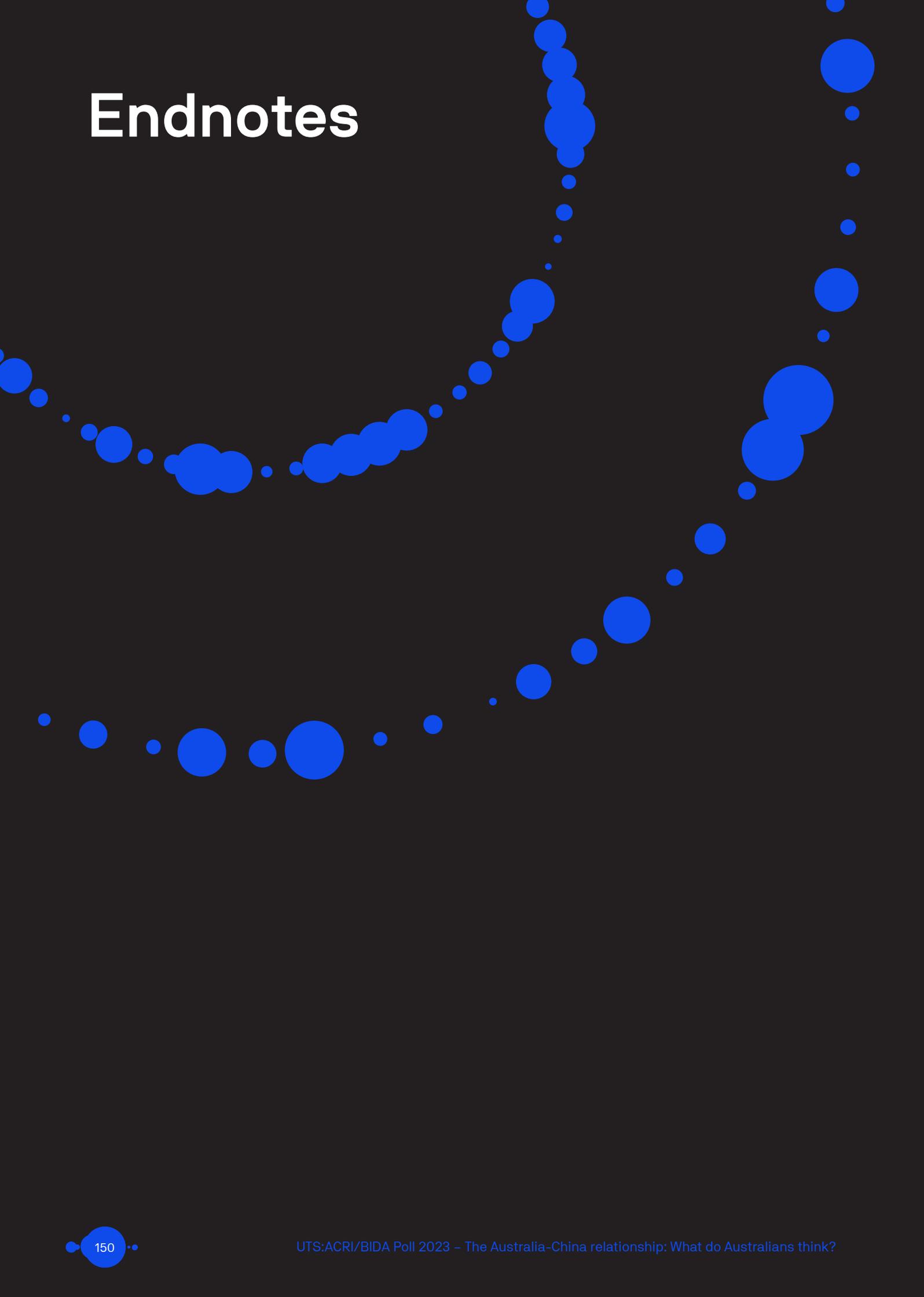
Table 65A. **Research collaboration (Science) (%)**

	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	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	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 66A. **Benefits of global and 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 global issues, such as climate change and global health	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
It is beneficial for Australia to work with China on regional issues, such as ending malaria in the Pacific	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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Australia-China Relations
Institute
澳中关系研究院



**Australia-China Relations Institute
University of Technology Sydney**

PO Box 123
Broadway NSW 2007
Australia

✉ acri@uts.edu.au

🐦 [@acri_uts](https://twitter.com/acri_uts)

www.australiachinarelations.org

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