Mental Health Australia

Report to the Nation 2023

Prepared for Mental Health Australia
by Ipsos Public Affairs

13 September, 2023

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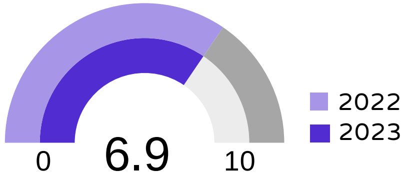
SUMMARY OF 2023 FINDINGS (ALL AUSTRALIANS)

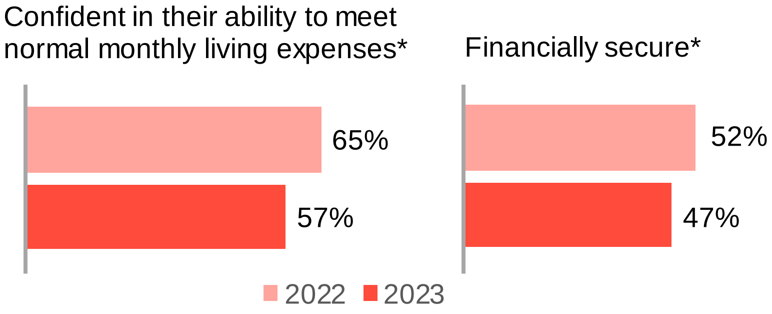
2023 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Australians' overall mental health score remains the same as last year

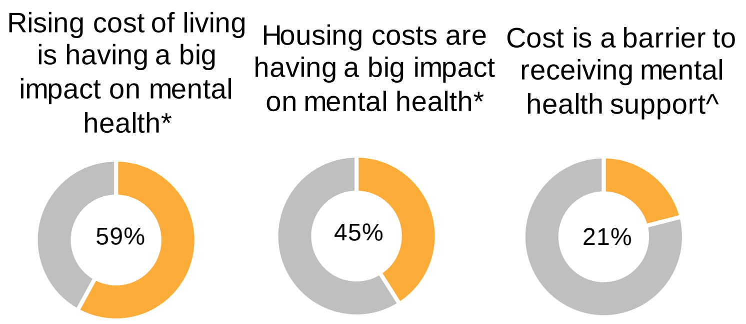


Cost of living pressures are impacting mental health

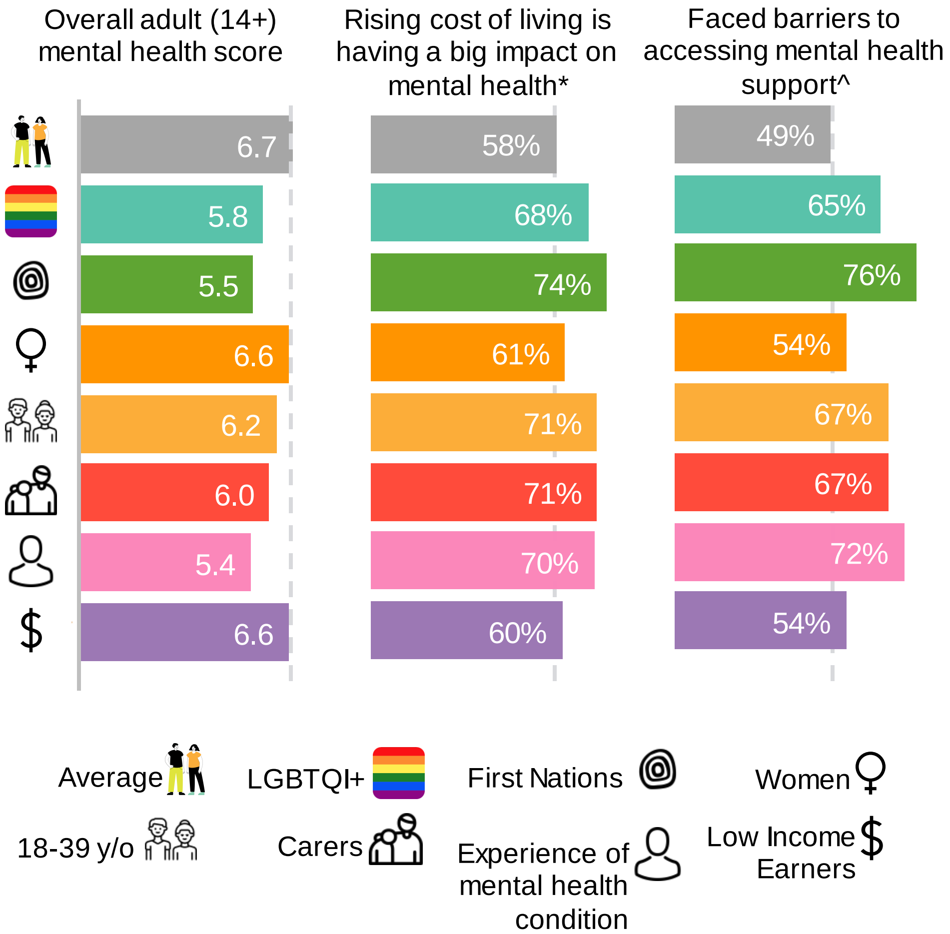
Fewer Australians are feeling…



…with many Australians saying that

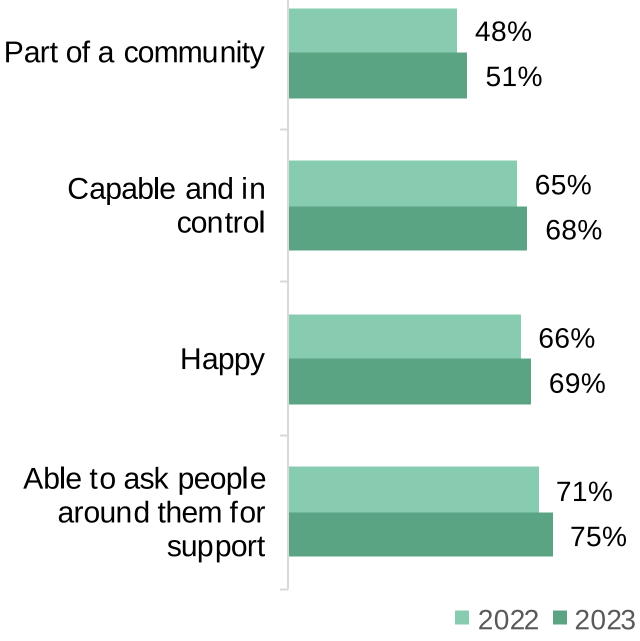


Particular population groups are being hit hardest



But there is good news… Australians also report feeling happier and more connected

Potentially reflecting changes moving out of the COVID-19 emergency response



2023 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Half of Australians report experiencing a barrier to accessing mental health support in the last year

Common barriers are^…

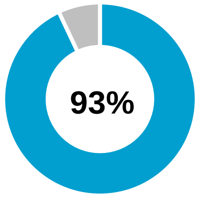
People feeling they should be able to solve their situation on their own
24%

Cost or financial barrier
21%

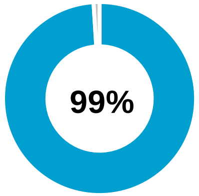
Long wait times for appointments
13%

When people do access support, more than 9 in 10 say…

The support improved their mental health



They felt safe & respected receiving support



The types of support we access are changing…

Speaking to colleagues, friends or family remains a common and important support^(39%) for adults

In 2023, the rate of Australian adults accessing other support services increased^…

Seeing a GP
41%
↑ 4%

Using digital mental health services or app
8%
↑ 4%

Seeing a psychologist, psychiatrist or counselor
30%
↑ 4%

Looking online for self-help information or support
18%
↑ 2%

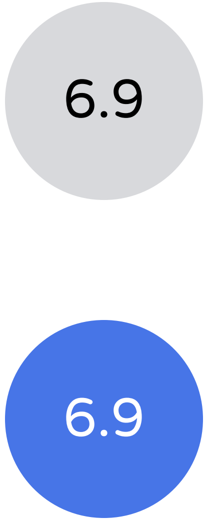
*18yo+ population
^ 14+yo population

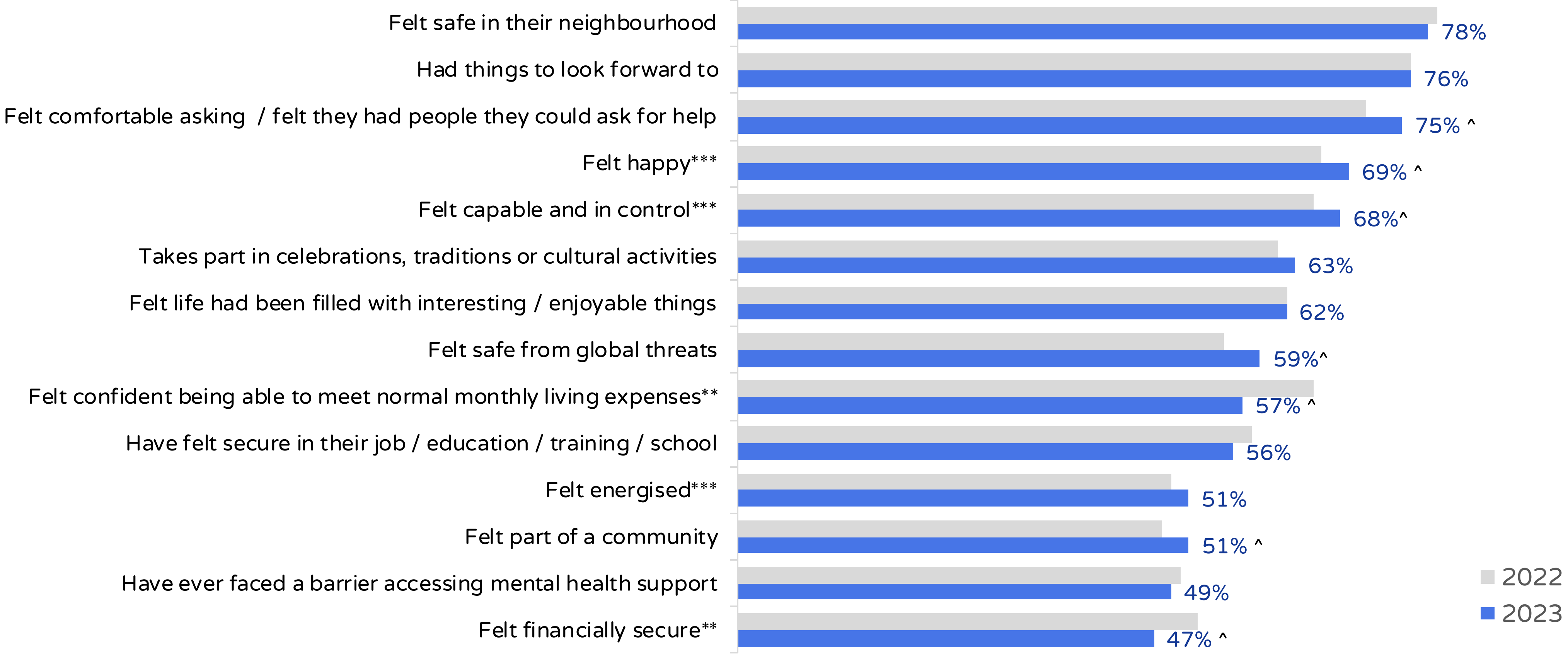
REPORT CARD

Australians rated their overall mental health similar to last year – while there have been positive changes in people feeling happier and more connected, Australians' wellbeing is also being negatively affected by cost of living.

Australians were significantly more likely in 2023 to say they felt comfortable reaching out for help and support (75% vs 71%), happy (69% vs 66%), capable and in control (68% vs 65%), safe from global threats (59% vs 55%), and part of a community (51% vs 48%). However, Australians were significantly less likely to report feeling confident in meeting normal monthly living expenses (57% vs 65%) or financially secure (47% vs 52%) in 2023, likely exacerbated by Australia's current cost of living crisis*.

Overall (Average) Mental Health





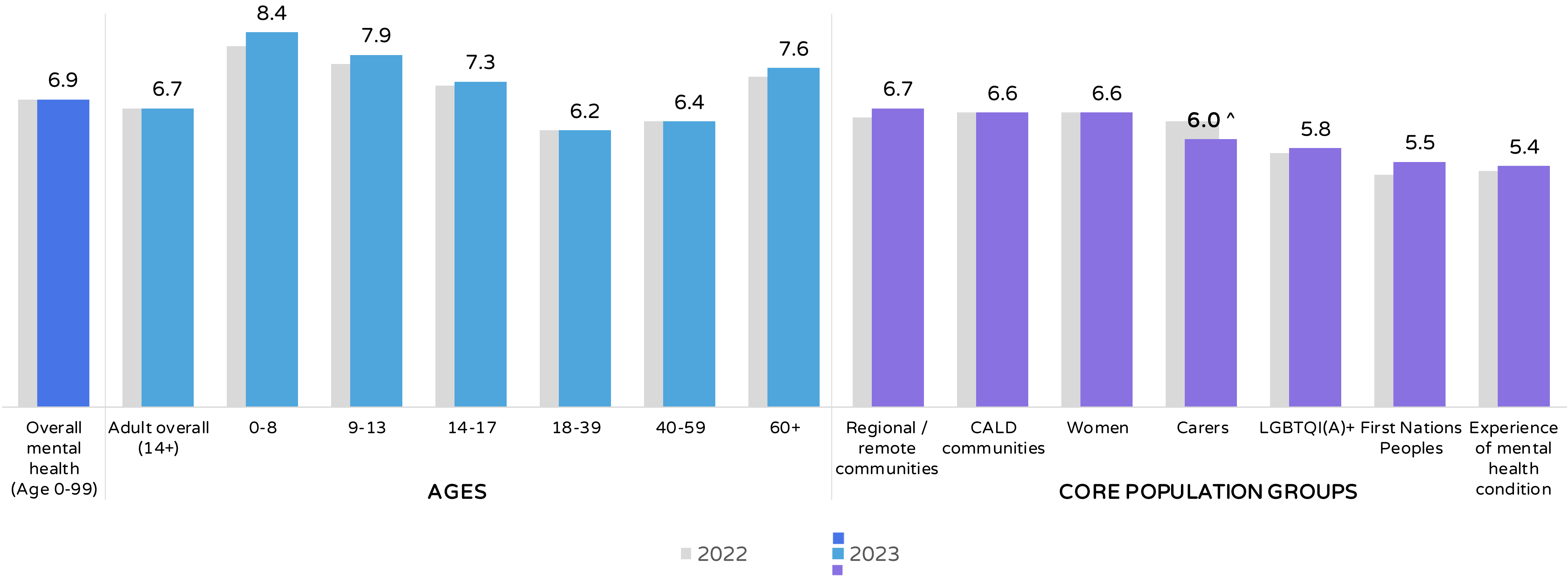
^significant difference between 2022 and 2023 at 95% CI

Base 2022 n=2,537; 2023 n=2,441. Note: **Only asked of 18+ ***Only asked of 9+

*Cost of living and housing currently the leading concerns of Australians. As shown in the July publication of the Ipsos Issues Monitor

2022 / 2023 AVERAGE MENTAL HEALTH

Ratings of overall mental health remained consistent with 2022, with the average of 6.9 out of 10 remaining stable in 2023. When compared to 2022, there was little variation among population groups or age cohorts, with the exception of carers who reported significantly lower overall mental health in 2023 than in 2022 (6.0 vs 6.4). When compared to 2022, there were no significant differences in the average rating of overall mental health among the different age cohorts, however upwards trends can be observed among those aged 0-8, 9-13, 14-17 and 60+.



^significant difference between 2022 and 2023 at 95% CI

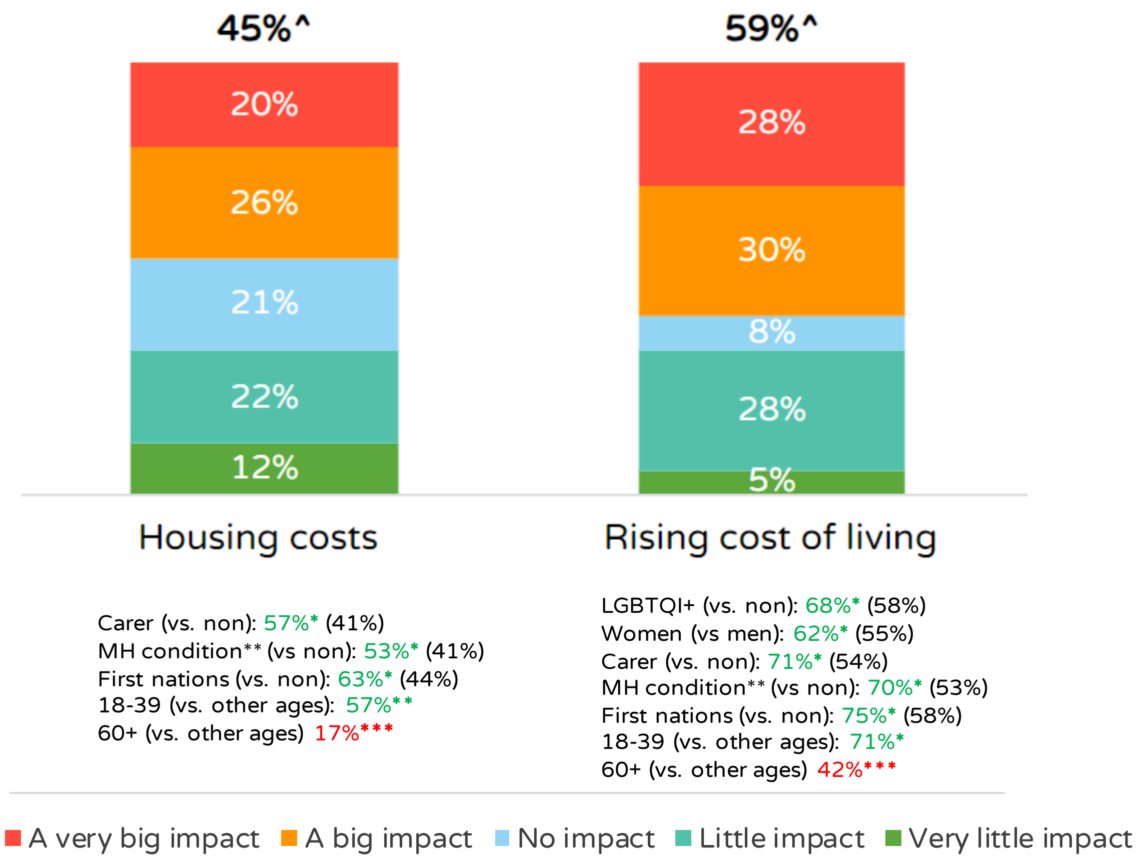
Thinking about how you have been feeling over the past three months, how would you rate your overall mental health?
Base 2022 n=2,456; 2023 n=2,388.

2

CURRENT TRENDS IMPACTING MENTAL HEALTH (AGES 14+)

CURRENT TRENDS IMPACTING MENTAL HEALTH

How big of an impact have the following issues had on your mental health…



In 2023, 45% of Australians said housing costs were having a big impact on their mental health and 59% said rising costs of living were having a big impact.

Particular population groups were even more impacted, including First Nations peoples, carers, people with experience of mental health condition/s and people who identify as LGBTQI+.

People aged 18 to 39 were significantly more likely to report being impacted by the current cost of housing and increased cost of living, while those aged 60 and above were significantly less impacted.

Thinking about how you have been feeling over the past 12 months, how big of an impact have the following issues had on your mental health? Note: Excludes 'not relevant' responses. Base 2023 n=2,233. ***Previous diagnosis of a mental health condition*

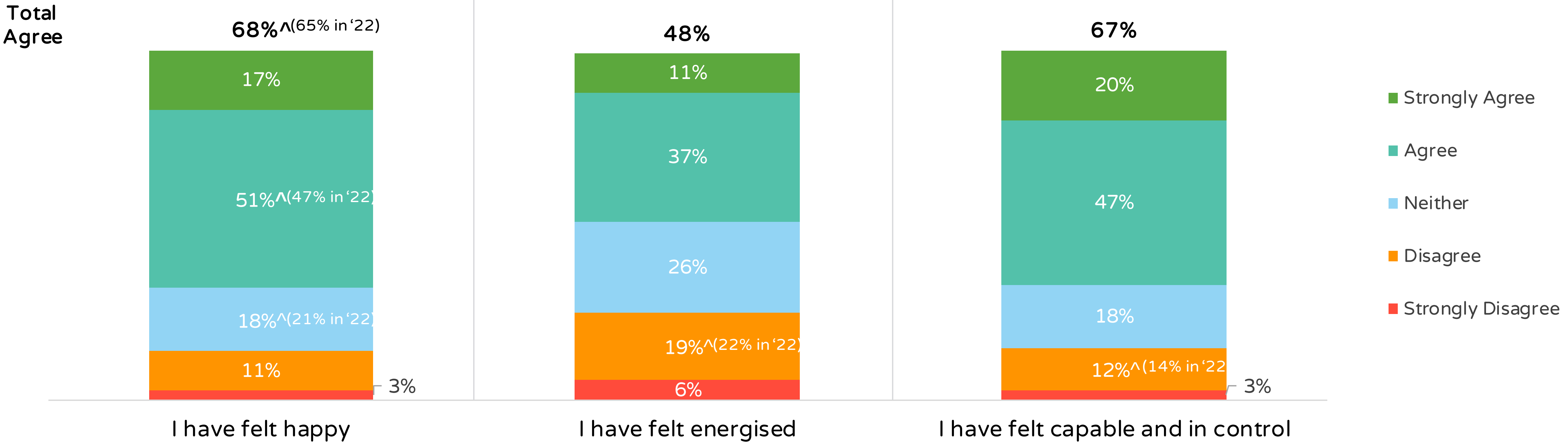
***significantly lower than the adult age group and the average adult in 2023 at 95% CI
**significantly higher than the adult age group and the average adult in 2023 at 95% CI
* significant difference between particular population group and wider population at 95% CI
^significantly different to the average of other statements within 2023 at 95% CI

3

CONTRIBUTING LIFE FRAMEWORK DOMAINS (AGES 14+)

THRIVING NOT JUST SURVIVING

Promisingly, measures of thriving not just surviving have improved in 2023. When compared to 2022, respondents were significantly more likely to agree that they had felt happy in the past three months (68% vs 65%). Moreover, when compared to 2022, respondents were significantly less likely to disagree with the statement that they had felt energised (19% vs 22%), or capable and in control (12% vs 14%) in the past three months. These results suggest that Australians are starting to regain some of the livelihood that may have been impacted by the emergency phase of COVID-19.



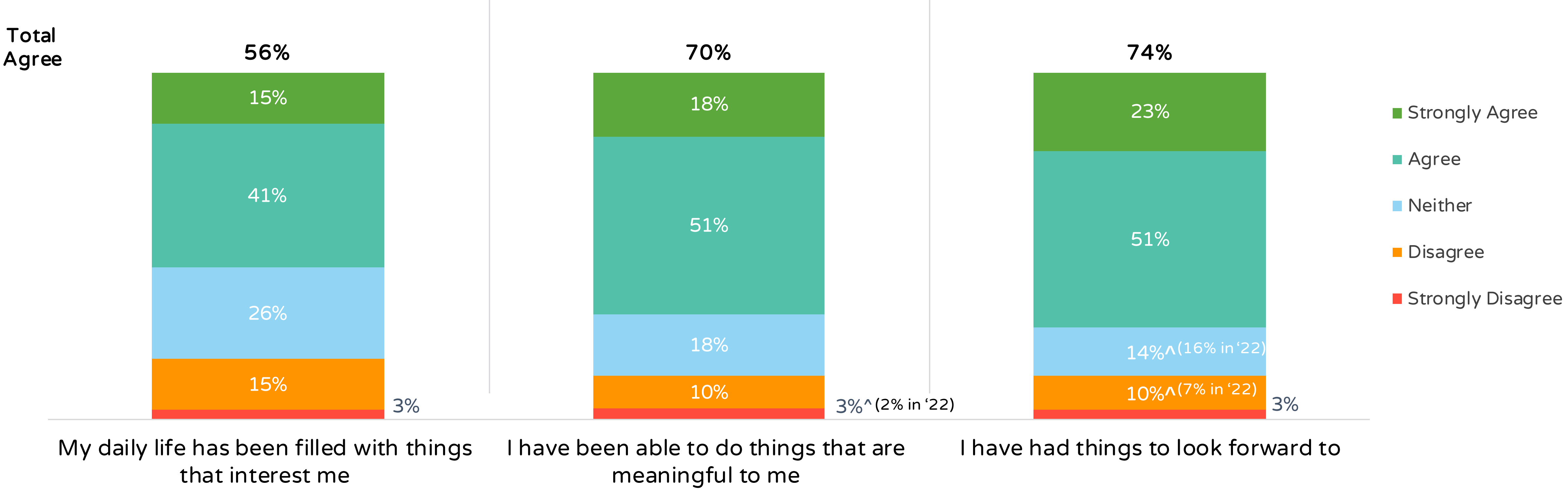
^significant difference between 2022 and 2023 at 95% CI

Q2. Thinking about how you have been feeling over the past three months: I have felt…

Note: Only responses of those aged 14 and above are shown. Base 2022 n=2,321; 2023 n=2,233.

HAVING SOMETHING MEANINGFUL TO DO, SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO

Overall, having something meaningful to do and something to look forward to has remained fairly stable in 2023. However, compared to 2022, significantly more respondents strongly disagreed that they had been able to do things that were meaningful to them in the past three months (3% vs 2%). Additionally, when compared to 2022, respondents were more likely to disagree that they had things to look forward to in the past three months (10% vs 7%). The decrease in meaningful and future-focused activities could be tied to increased concerns about cost of living and less disposable income during this time.



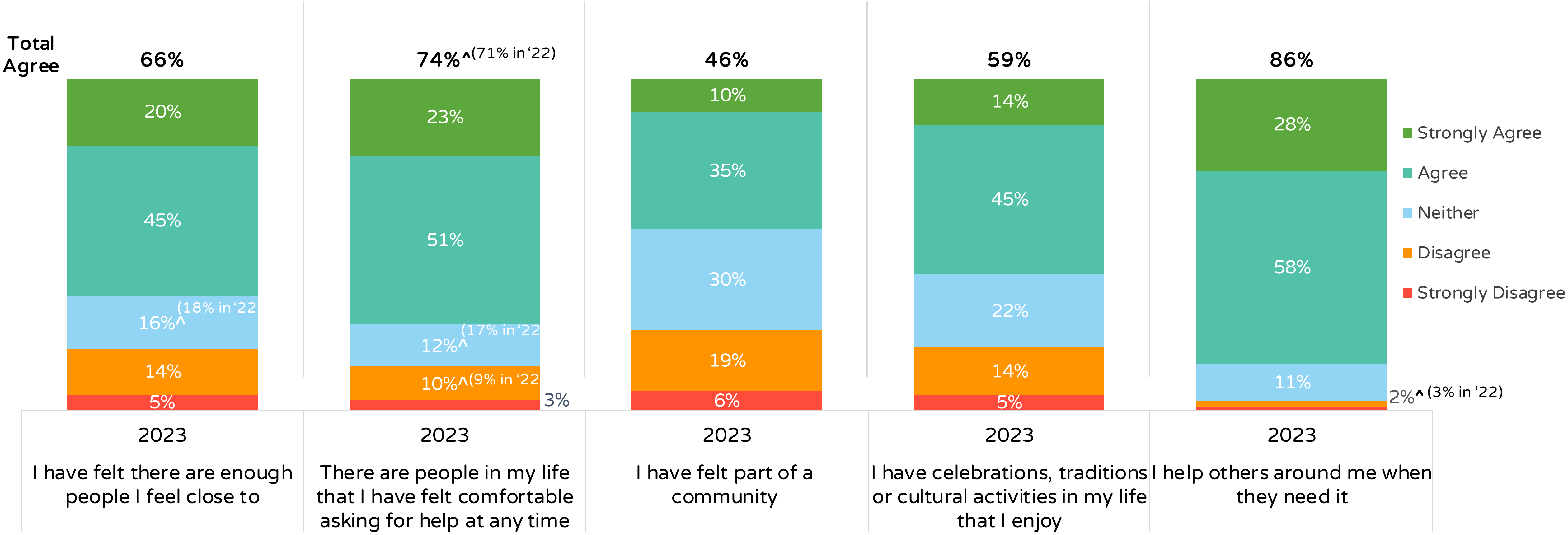
^significant difference between 2022 and 2023 at 95% CI

Q3. And again, thinking about how you have been feeling over the past three months:

Note: Only responses of those aged 14 and above are shown. Base 2022 n=2,321; 2023 n=2,233.

HAVING FAMILY, FRIENDS, CULTURE & COMMUNITY

Respondents were significantly more likely to agree in 2023 that they had people in their lives they were comfortable asking for help at any time (74% vs 71%). The proportion of respondents agreeing to other statements within this domain have remained stable compared to 2022, with all statements showing a minor increase. This again suggests that respondents are beginning to rebuild communities and relationships that may have been impacted over the previous few years.



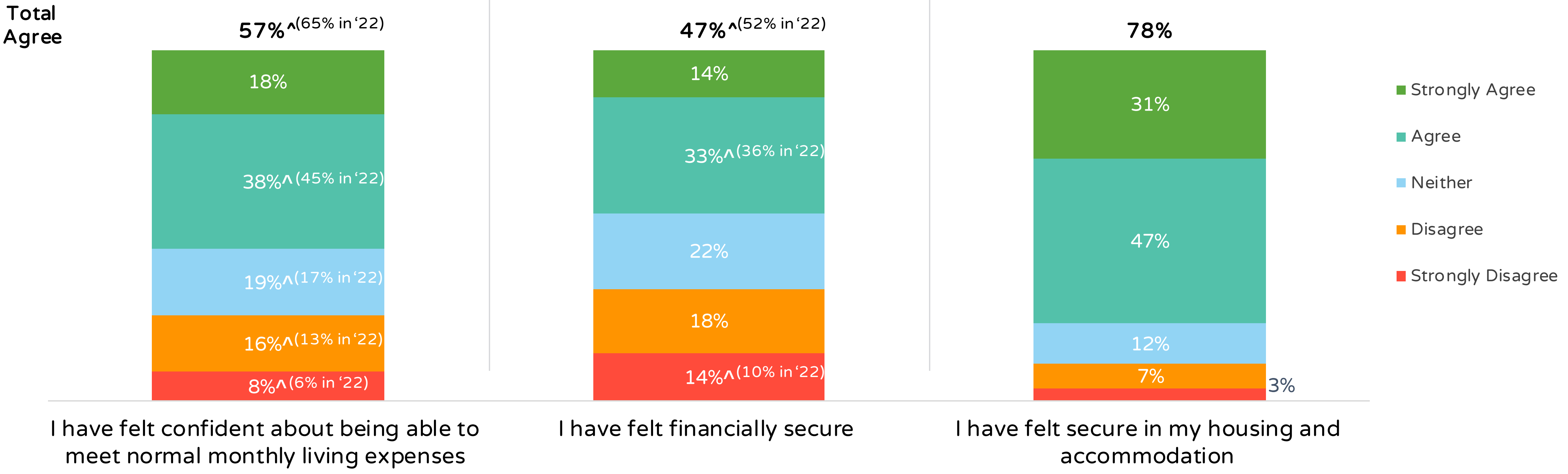
^significant difference between 2022 and 2023 at 95% CI

Q4. The following questions relate to your connections with others. Thinking about how you have been feeling over the past three months:

Note: Only responses of those aged 14 and above are shown. Base 2022 n=2,321; 2023 n=2,233. Response labels of 1% not shown.

FEELING SAFE, STABLE AND SECURE (1/2)

Confidence in meeting monthly living expenses has declined significantly in the previous year (57% vs 65%), with significantly more respondents disagreeing (16% vs 13%) or strongly disagreeing (8% vs 6%) that they felt confident to meet monthly expenses in the past three months. Similarly, significantly fewer respondents agreed to feeling financially secure over the previous three months (47% vs 52%), with a significant increase in respondents strongly disagreeing with this statement (14% vs 10%). As noted on slide 4, the impacts of the cost of living crisis are widespread across the Australian population, and are felt even more acutely by particular population groups.



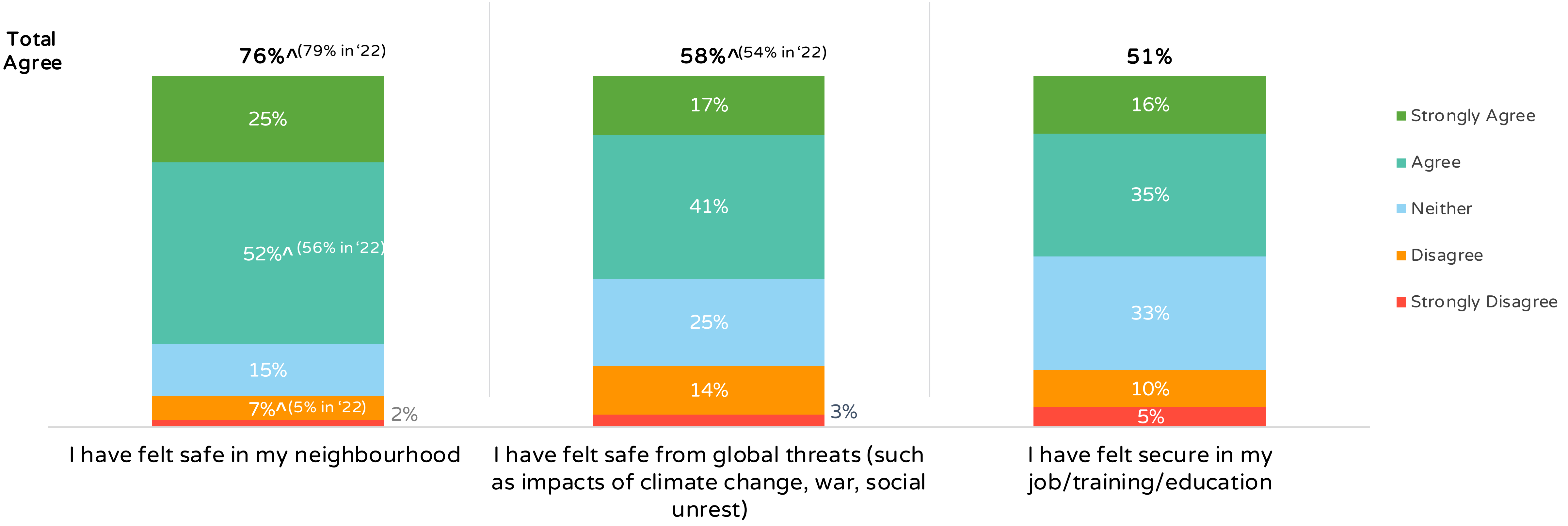
Q5. The following questions relate to your feelings of safety and security. Thinking about how you have been feeling over the past three months:

Note: Only responses of those aged 14 and above are shown. Base 2022 n=2,321; 2023 n=2,233 **Only asked of 18+

^significant difference between 2022 and 2023 at 95% CI

FEELING SAFE, STABLE AND SECURE (2/2)

Perceptions of neighbourhood safety have declined compared to 2022, with significantly fewer respondents agreeing that they had felt safe in their neighbourhood (76% vs 79%). Conversely, feeling safe from global threats has improved significantly in 2023 (58% vs 54%), with significantly more respondents agreeing overall that they felt safe from global threats (such as impacts of climate change, war and social unrest) over the past three months – likely due to the lower threat of COVID-19 and removal of restrictions.



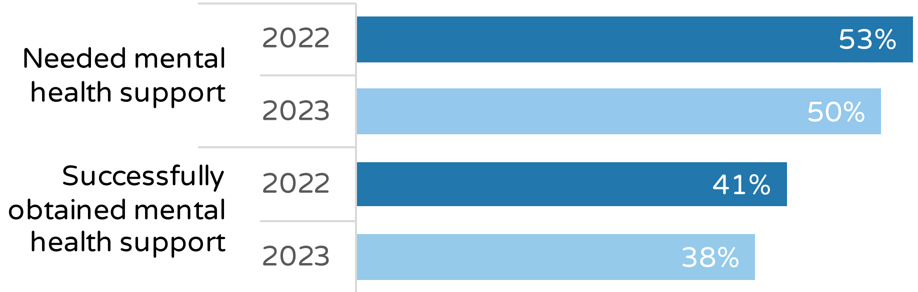
^significant difference between 2022 and 2023 at 95% CI

Q5. The following questions relate to your feelings of safety and security. Thinking about how you have been feeling over the past three months:

Note: Only responses of those aged 14 and above are shown. Base 2022 n=2,321; 2023 n=2,233

EFFECTIVE SUPPORT, CARE & TREATMENT

Both the need for mental health support and the number of respondents successfully obtaining support have remained stable compared to 2022. However, the type of mental health support most frequently accessed differs compared to 2022, with seeing a GP now the most commonly accessed support, compared to 2022 when the most frequently accessed support was speaking with colleagues, friends and family members. The use of both digital mental health services or apps and seeing a psychologist, psychiatrist or counsellor have increased significantly.



Of those who obtained support in 2023, it was most frequently…

Seeing a GP
41%

Speaking with colleagues, friends or family members
39%

Seeing a psychologist, psychiatrist or counselor
30%^
(26% in '22)

Looking online for self-help information or support
18%

Using digital mental health services or app
8%^
(4% in '22)

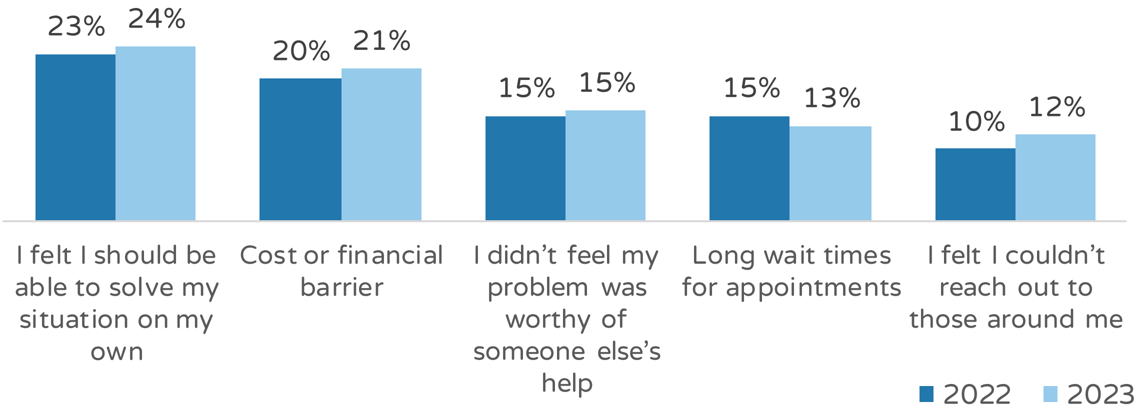
Following the support obtained…

Almost all
(99%)
felt safe and respected in the support they received

Most
(92%)
felt the support or information improved their mental health

Most common barriers to mental health support…

51% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



^significant difference between 2022 and 2023 at 95% CI

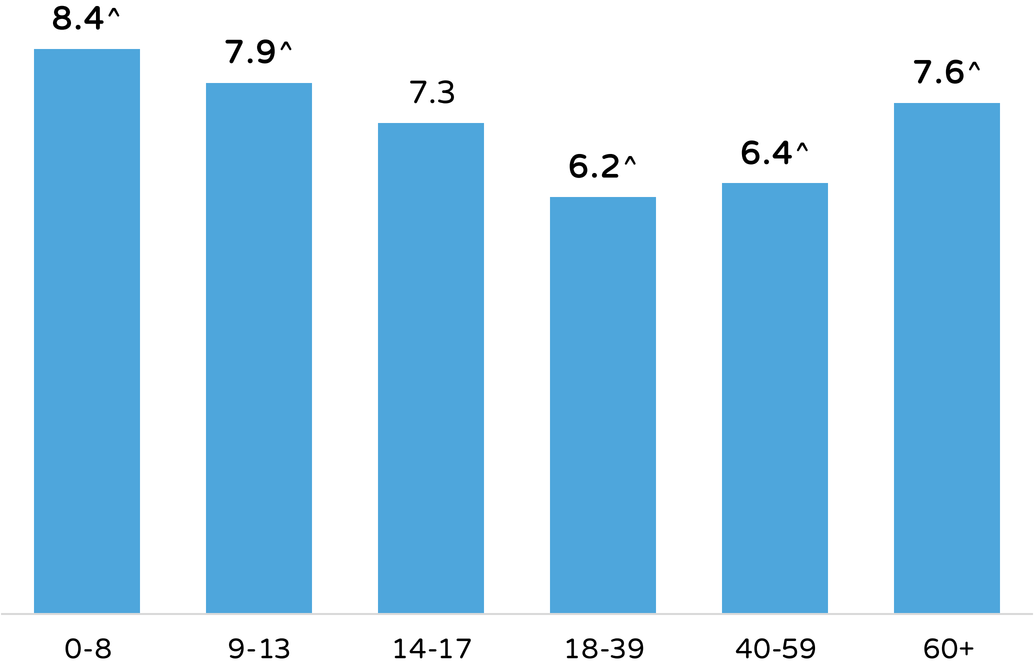
4

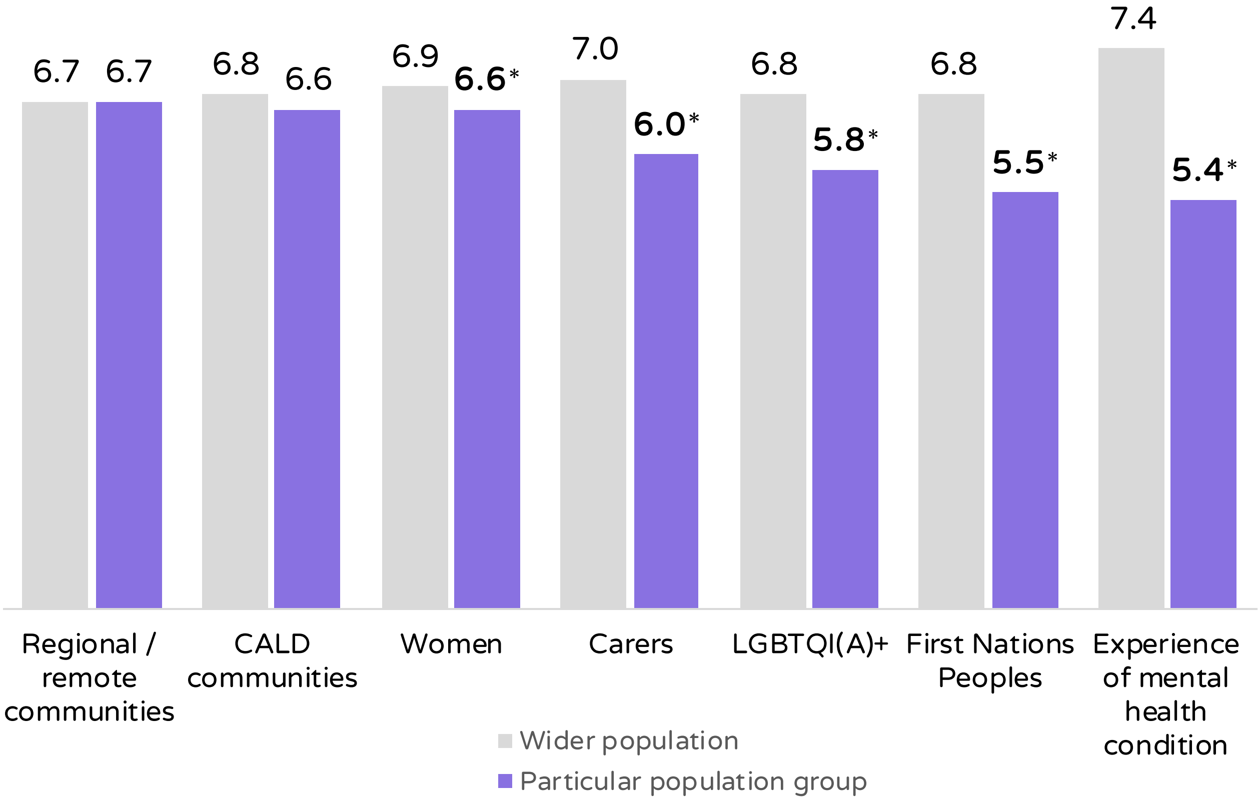
AGE AND POPULATION GROUPS OF INTEREST (AGES 14+)

2023 AVERAGE OVERALL MENTAL HEALTH

Ratings of overall mental health differed significantly between age groups, with the youngest age groups (0-8 and 9-13 year olds) and the oldest age group (60 and above) reporting significantly higher ratings of overall mental health (8.4, 7.9 and 7.6 respectively) than other age groups. Conversely, the lowest overall mental health rating was reported by those aged 18-39 (6.2), followed closely by the 40-59 year old cohort (6.4). These findings are consistent with both 2022 results and the well documented u-shaped curve of happiness during the lifespan**.

Ratings of overall mental health also differed significantly within population groups, with particular groups including carers (6.0), women (6.6), those who identify as LGBTQI+ (5.8), First Nations Australians (5.5) and those who have experienced mental health conditions (5.4) reporting significantly poorer overall mental health when compared to the wider population.





*significant difference between particular population group and wider population at 95% CI
^significant difference between the age group and the average age in 2023 at 95% CI

Thinking about how you have been feeling over the past three months, how would you rate your overall mental health? Base 2022 n=2,456; 2023 n=2,388

**Blanchflower D., Oswald A., 2008 (*Is well-being U-shaped over the life cycle? – ScienceDirect*).

4.1

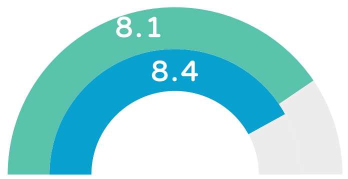
AGE GROUPS

CHILDREN (0-8 YEARS OLD)

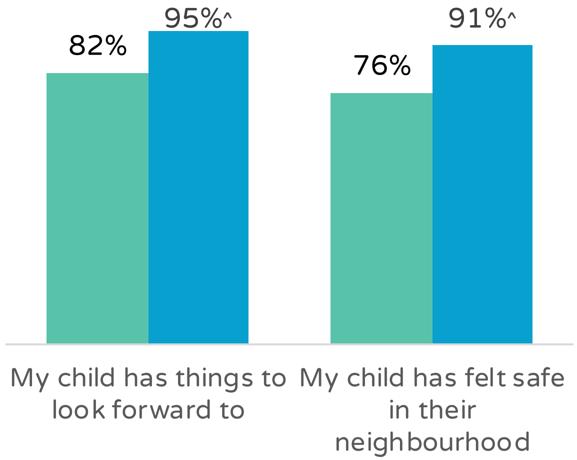
Compared to 2022, there has been a significant increase in parents and carers of children eight years old and under reporting that their child has felt safe in their neighbourhood (91% vs 76%) and has had something to look forward to (95% vs 82%) in the last three months. The remaining measures of mental health and wellbeing among children eight years old and under have remined relatively stable in 2023.

2022
2023

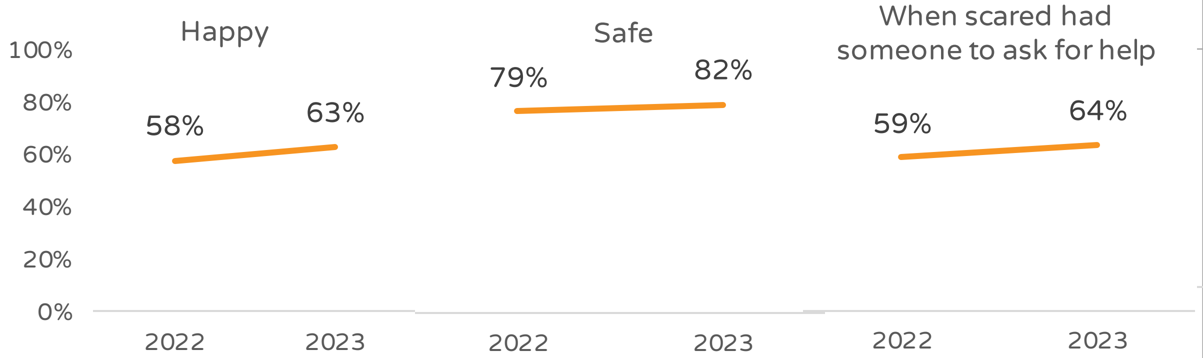
Overall mental health rating



Over the past 3 months, parents/carers felt their child…



*Over last 3 months, always felt…

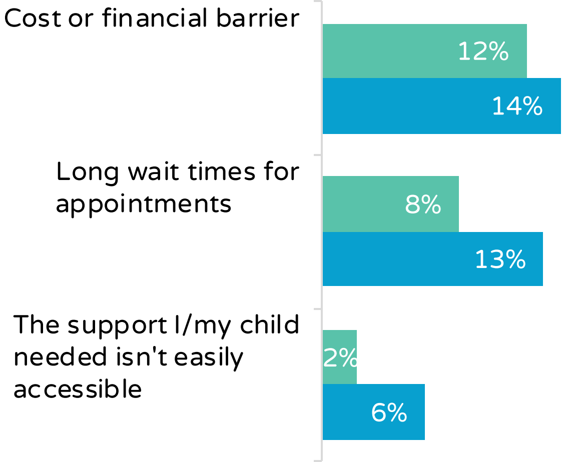


Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

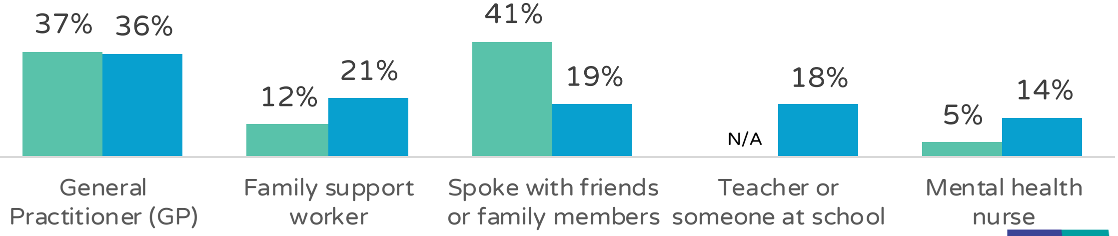
43% needed mental health support or information for their child

35% obtained support or information

39% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months



^significant difference between 2022 and 2023 at 95% CI

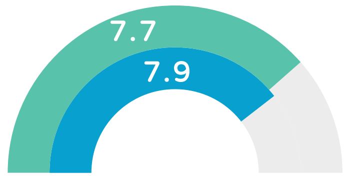
*Children responded themselves, where able..

YOUNG PEOPLE (9-13 YEARS OLD)

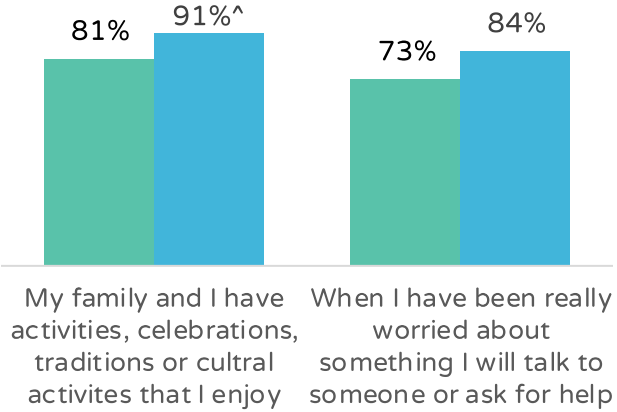
There has been a significant increase in young people aged 9 to 13 years old reporting they have felt capable and in controlin the last three months (82% vs 65%), compared to 2022. Moreover, the number of young people aged 9 to 13 stating that they and their family have had enjoyable activities, celebrations, traditions or cultural activities in the last three months has also increased significantly since 2022 (91% vs 81%). As noted with adults,this is likely due to the reduced COVID-19 restrictions. The remaining measures of mental health and wellbeing among young people aged 9-13 have remined relatively stable in the last twelve months.

2022
2023

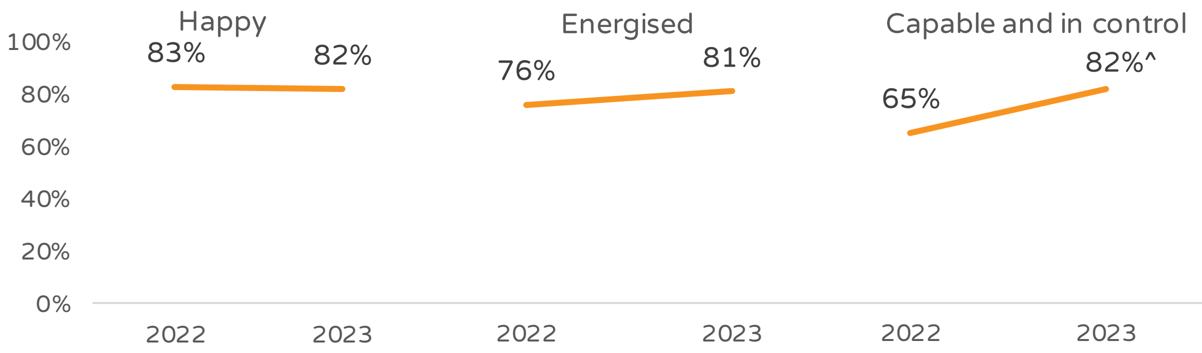
Overall mental health rating



Over the past 3 months, felt…



Over last 3 months, felt…

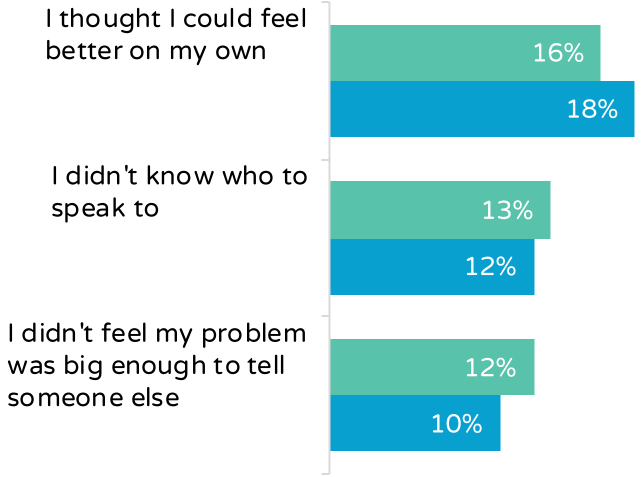


Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

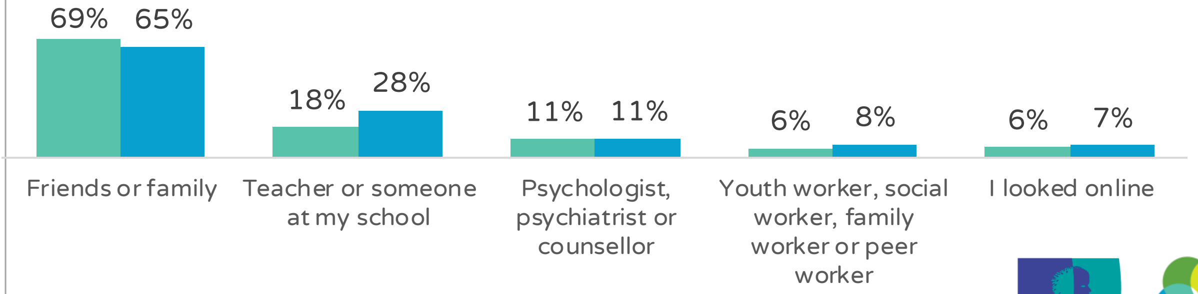
76% needed support or information

72% obtained support or information

46% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months



^significant difference between 2022 and 2023 at 95% CI

ADULTS

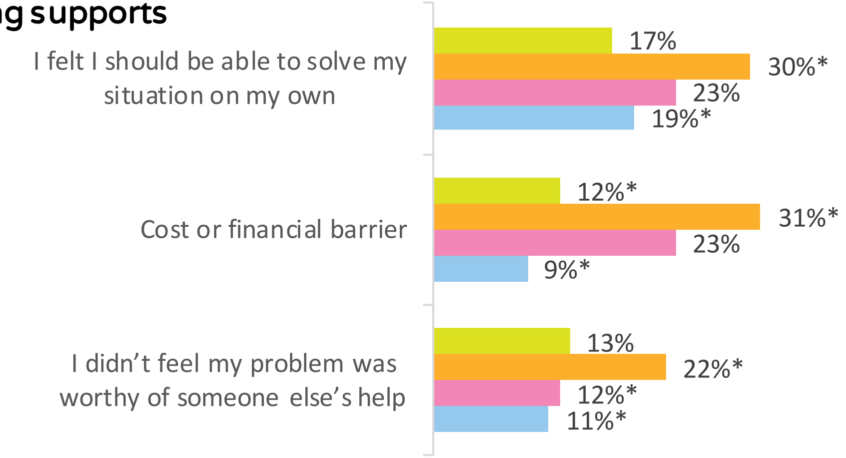
More than half (51%) of adults 14+ reported facing a barrier when trying to access support over the past 12 months. Aligned with the age group significantly more likely to report mental health impacts of rising costs of living and increased housing costs, adults aged 18-39 were significantly more likely to report cost as a barrier to accessing support for their mental health and wellbeing. 18-39 year-olds were also significantly more likely to report feeling they should be able to solve the situation on their own (30%) and feeling their problem wasn't worthy of someone else's help (22%) as barriers, whereas older adults aged 60 and above were significantly less likely than other age groups to face these barriers (9%, 19% and 11%). Encouragingly, those aged 18-39 were significantly more likely to speak with colleagues, friends or family members (48%), look online for self-help (26%) or use a digital mental health service or app (11%) suggesting feelings of stigma associated with mental ill-health may be decreasing.

Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

50% needed support or information

38% obtained support or information

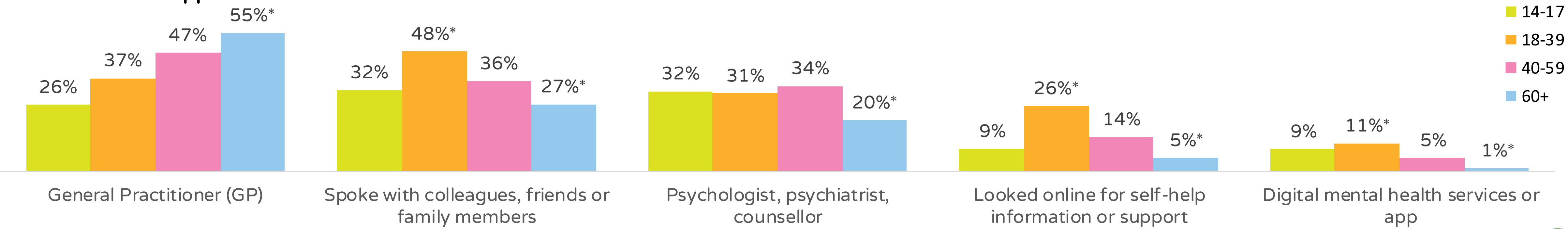
51% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



There has been a significant decrease in some barriers:

- I didn't know who to speak to (among 18-39 Years old: 15% to 11%^)
- Previous experience of mental health services made me worried about accessing support (among 60+ Years old : 7% to 3%^)

Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months



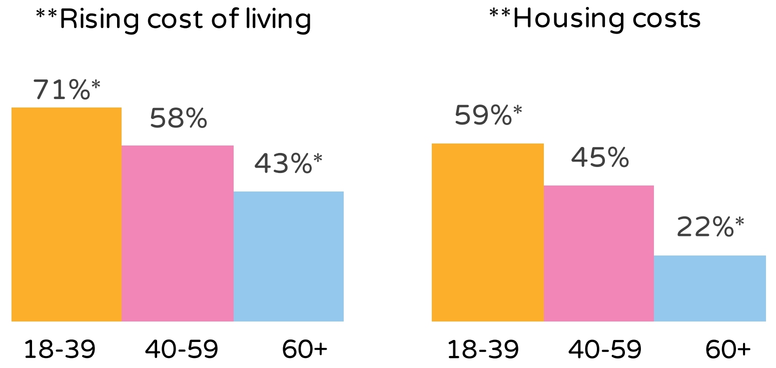
*significant difference between the adult age group and the average adult score in 2023 at 95% CI

ADULTS

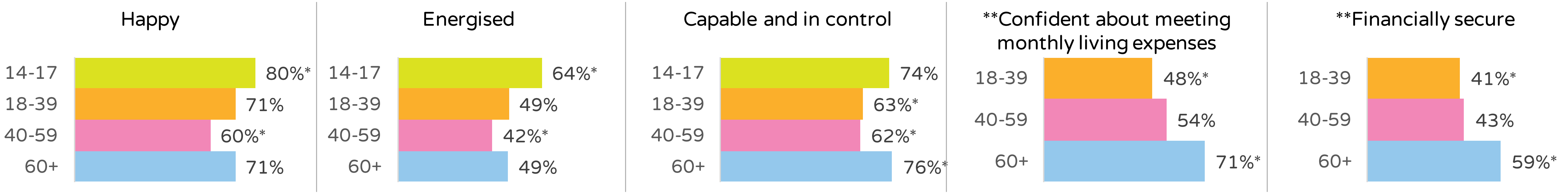
Overall ratings of mental health differ significantly among adult age groups with the youngest (14-17) and oldest (60+) age groups reporting significantly higher levels of overall mental health (7.3 and 7.6) whereas those aged 18-59 report significantly lower ratings of mental health (6.2) than the average adult score. This trend is again evident in rates of agreement with feeling happy, energised and capable and in control. When looking at questions asked of those aged 18 and older, it can be seen that the current cost of living crisis is disproportionately affecting younger cohorts with those aged 18-39 less likely to report feeling financially secure (41%) or confident about meeting monthly living expenses (48%) and more likely to report that rising costs of living (71%) and housing costs (59%) had a big impact on their mental health. Conversely, those aged 60 and above were significantly more likely to report feeling financially secure (59%) and confident about meeting monthly living expenses (71%) while also being the least likely to report feeling the impact of rising cost of living (43%) and housing costs (22%), likely linked to the overall mental health rating.

Overall mental health rating

Felt big impact on mental health of...



Over last 3 months, felt...



*significant difference between the adult age group and the average adult score in 2023 at 95% CI

**Only asked of 18+

4.2

POPULATION GROUPS (AGES 14+)

SUMMARY – POPULATION GROUPS

Overall mental health score

- Amongst the population groups of interest, unsurprisingly those who experience with a mental health condition had the lowest self-reported overall mental rating (5.4). This was closely followed by First Nations Australians (5.5), LGBTQI+ adults (5.8) and Carers (6.0).

Thriving not just surviving

- When it comes to having felt happy and energised in 2023, all population groups of interest, with the exception of carers, have seen an increase in comparison to 2022. However, almost all groups still score lower than the overall population average. Following a similar pattern to overall mental health score, those with experience of a mental health condition and First Nations Australians were the least likely to agree they have felt happy over the past three months (53% and 53%), followed by low income earners (57%), LGBTQI+ adults (59%), Carers (61%), CALD (66%), and females (66%). Those living in regional and remote areas again matched the average overall score (68%).
- Important to celebrate is the progress that has been seen in reported happiness in 2023; those with a mental health condition (53% vs 46% in 2022) and those living in a regional or remote area (68% vs 63% in 2022) both saw significant increases.
- Once again, those with a mental health condition were the least likely population group to agree that they had felt energised over the last three months (34%) however this was a significant increase on 2022 (28%). When asked if they have felt capable and in control over the past three months, First Nations Australians had the lowest result, with less than half (49%) agreeing with this statement, closely followed by half (50%) of those with experience of a mental health condition. Those living in a regional or remote area were just as likely to agree they felt capable and in control as the overall average (67%).

Having something meaningful to do, something to look forward to

- First Nations Australians and those with experience with a mental health condition were the least likely to report that they had something to do that was of interest, was meaningful to them or to look forward to. LGBTQI+ adults again had lower results in comparison to the overall average.
- In 2023, carers were significantly less likely than in 2022 to agree they had something to look forward to (68% vs 75%).
- Unlike the other population groups, those living in a regional and remote area were more likely than the overall average to agree to each of these statements.

SUMMARY – POPULATION GROUPS

Having family, friends, culture & community

- First Nations Australians were the group least likely to agree they have had enough people they felt close to (52%) or had people in their life that they felt comfortable asking for help at any time (58%).
- Those who have experience with a mental health condition were the least likely population group to agree that they have felt a part of a community (36%) or had celebrations, traditions or cultural activities in their life that they enjoy (47%). However, they were significantly more likely to agree, compared to 2022, that they have felt there are people they feel close to and that there are people in their lives that they feel comfortable asking for help from at any time (55% vs 49% and 69% vs 62%). Low income earners were the second least likely group to agree that they had celebrations, traditions or cultural activities in their life that they enjoy (49%). CALD Australians were the most likely to agree that they had celebrations or cultural activities in their life that they enjoy (62%).
- Carers were most likely to agree that they help others around them when it was needed (90%), and those living in regional and remote areas were the most likely to say they felt part of a community (46%).
- Females were the most likely group to agree they had enough people they are close to (66%) and that there are people in their life they felt comfortable asking for help from at any time (77%, significantly increased from 72% in 2022).

Feeling safe, stable and secure

- First Nations peoples were most likely to indicate that the rising cost of living and housing costs are having a big impact on their mental health (75% and 63%). This group was followed by carers (71% and 57%), those with experience of a mental health condition (70% and 53%), LGBTQI+ adults (68% and 50%), females (62% and 47%), CALD Australians (60% and 48%) and those living in a regional or remote area (59% and 45%). A similar pattern was seen for financial security and confidence, with First Nations Australians least likely to feel confident about being able to meet normal monthly living expenses (33%) and feeling financially secure (29%). This was followed by those with experience of a mental health condition (41% vs 32%) and low income earners (48% vs 34%).
- Once again, First Nations were least likely to report feelings of safety, with only 64% agreeing they feeling they felt safe in their neighbourhood and 44% feeling safe from global threats (such as impacts of climate change, war, social unrest).
- Several groups were less likely to agree that they feel safe in their neighbourhood in 2023 compared to 2022, including; those with experience of a mental health condition (68% vs 74%), carers (72% vs 80%) and females (75% vs 79%).
- Those living in regional and remote areas were significantly more likely to agree that they feel safe from global threats in 2023 in comparison to in 2022 (58% vs 52%).

SUMMARY – POPULATION GROUPS

Effective Support, care & treatment

- First Nations Australians were the group most likely to indicate that they needed mental health support or information (84%), followed by those with experience of a mental health condition (76%), LGBTQI+ community members (71%), carers (66%), CALD Australians (61%), females (52%), low income earners (50%), with those in a regional or remote area being the least likely (49%).
- When trying to access mental health and wellbeing support, First Nations Australians were the most likely to indicate that they had faced a barrier (76%), followed by those with a mental health condition (72%), carers (67%), LGBTQI+ adults (65%), CALD Australians (58%), females (54%), low income earners (54%) and lastly those living in regional and remote areas (50%).
- All population groups faced the same two most common barriers; cost or financial barriers and feeling they should be able to solve the situation alone. The third most common barrier for First Nations, carers, females, those with an experience of a mental health condition and low income earners, was long wait times (22%, 22%, 16%, 26% and 16%).
- Almost all groups most frequently accessed support through a GP, with the exception of CALD Australians who were most likely to go to colleagues, friends or family members for support (34%).
- While 99% of First Nations Australians, females and those living in regional and remote areas reported feeling safe and respected by the person providing them support, a slightly lower 98% of LGBTQI+ adults and 97% of CALD and low income earners felt safe and respected.

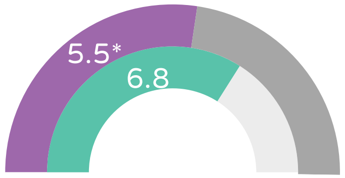
FIRST NATIONS

As observed in 2022, First Nations Australians reported a significantly lower overall mental health rating on average, compared to non-First Nations Australians (5.5 vs. 6.8). This cohort were also significantly more likely to agree that the rising cost of living and housing costs are having a big impact on their mental health (75% and 63%). Whilst still lower than non-First Nations, encouragingly, First Nations Australians were significantly more likely to feel energised in 2023 (42%) when compared to 2022 (26%). Over the past 3 months, 84% of First Nations Australians report needing support or information for their mental health, the highest of any population group. Promisingly however, there has been a decrease this year in fear of stigma or discrimination (15% down from 26%) and not feeling their problem was worthy of someone else's help (10% down from 21%) as barriers to accessing support, suggesting an increase in First Nations Australians feeling comfortable discussing their mental health and wellbeing.

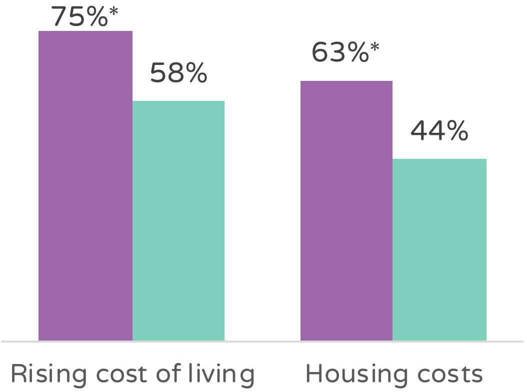
First Nations Australians

Non-First Nations Australians

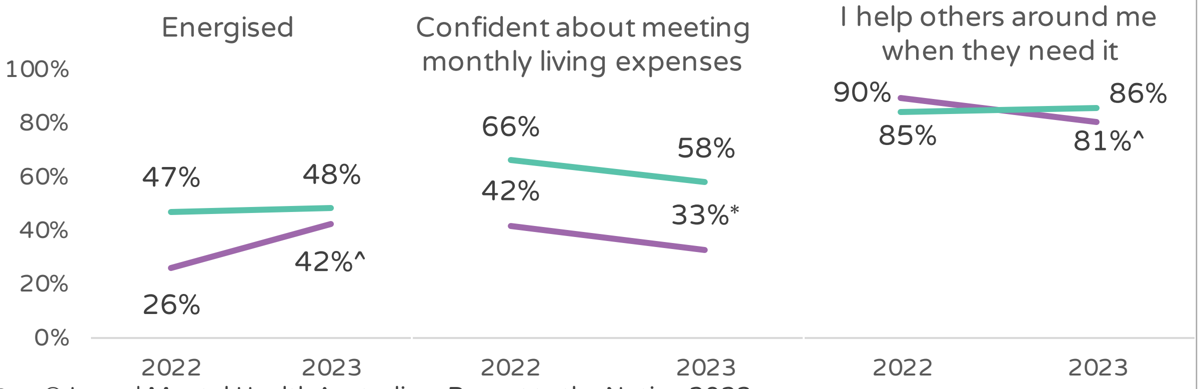
Overall mental health rating 2023



Felt big impact on mental health of…



Over last 3 months, felt…

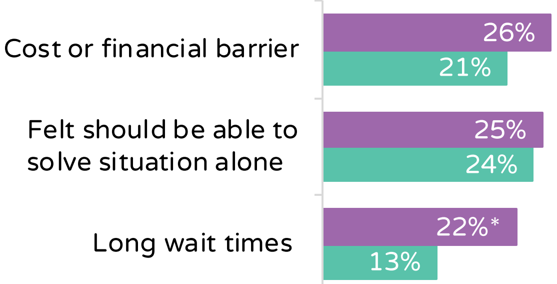


Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

84% needed support or information

58% obtained support or information

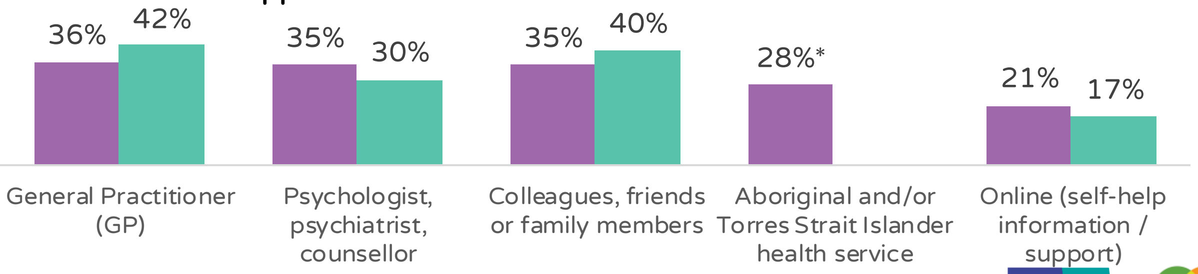
76% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



Promisingly, there has been a decrease in some barriers:

- Fear of stigma or discrimination (26% to 15%^)
- I didn't feel my problem was worthy of someone else's help (21% to 10%^)

Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months



*significant difference between First and Non-First Nation Australians 2023 at 95% CI
^significant difference between First Nation Australians 2022 to 2023 at 95% CI

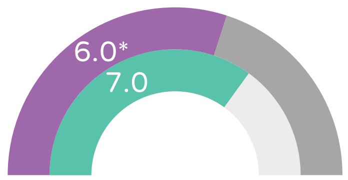
CARERS

Carers (those who said they have experience providing regular and ongoing support to a friend or family member with a mental health condition) rated their own mental health significantly lower on average than non-carers (6.0 compared to 7.0). Carers were the only population group to rate their overall mental health significantly lower in 2023 than in 2022 (6.0 vs 6.4). Carers were also significantly more likely to agree that the rising cost of living and housing costs have had a big impact on their mental health (71% vs 54% and 57% vs 41% respectively). In addition, carers were significantly less likely than non-carers to have felt that they had things to look forward to (68% vs 76%), felt safe in their neighbourhood (72% vs 78%) or confident about meeting monthly living expenses (44% vs 61%). Carers were significantly more likely than non-carers to face barriers to accessing mental health supports including cost or financial barriers (32% vs 17%), feeling they should be able to solve the situation alone (32% vs 21%) and long wait times (22% vs 10%). When accessing mental health supports in the last three months, they most frequently accessed a GP (significantly more than non-carers 53% vs 36%).

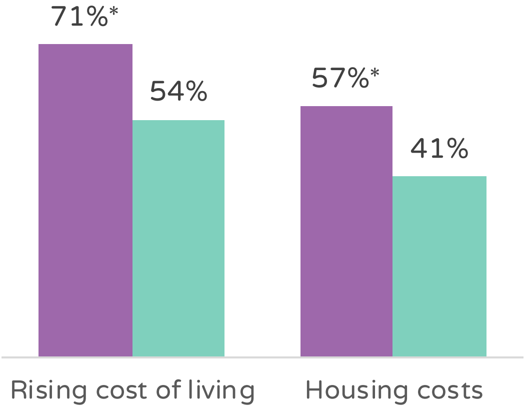
Carers

Non-Carers

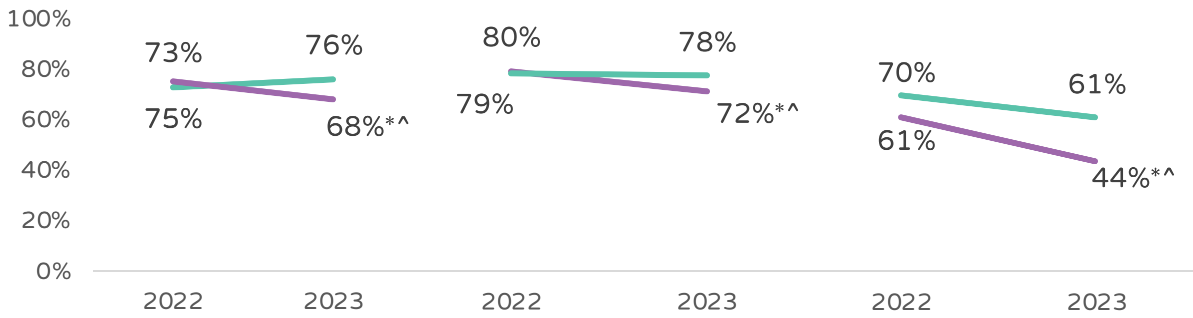
Overall mental health rating 2023



Felt big impact on mental health of...



Over last 3 months, felt...

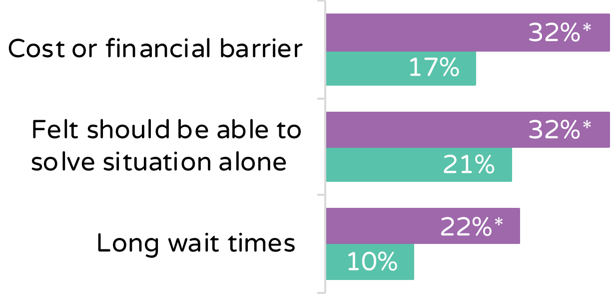


Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

66% needed support or information

50% obtained support or information

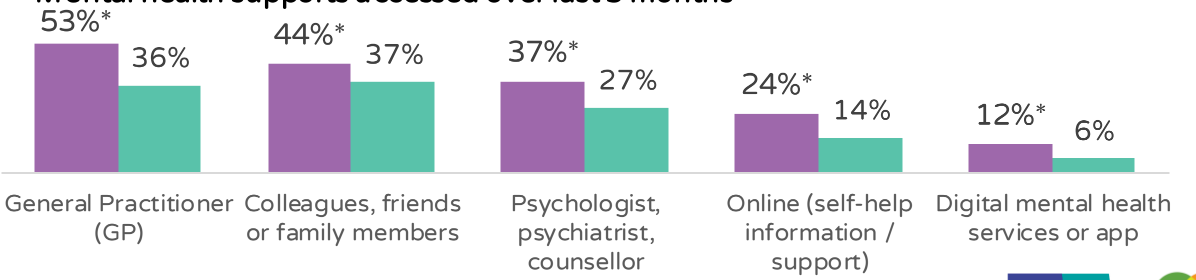
67% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



Promisingly, there has been a decrease in some barriers:

- I didn't feel my problem was worthy of someone else's help (19% to 18%)
- I didn't know who to speak to (10% to 8%)
- I didn't know how to find support (7% to 5%)

Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months



*significant difference between Carers and Non-Carers 2023 at 95% CI
^significant difference between Carers 2022 to 2023 at 95% CI

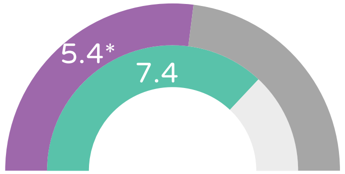
EXPERIENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION/S

Unsurprisingly, those who have experienced a mental health condition reported significantly lower overall mental health than those who have not experienced a mental health condition (5.4 vs 7.4). This self reported mental health score was the lowest of all groups of interest. Encouragingly, Australians with a mental health condition/s were significantly more likely to agree they have been feeling happy and energised (53% vs 46% and 34% vs 28%) compared to 2022, however they are still significantly less likely to report this in comparison to those without a mental health condition/s. This group were also more likely to experience recent financial impacts, being significantly less likely to agree they felt confident about meeting monthly living expenses and more likely to feel that the rising cost of living and housing costs have had a big impact on their mental health. People with a mental health condition were significantly more likely to face barriers to accessing mental health support, potentially also reflecting greater rates of seeking support. However, in 2023 this group were less likely to face some barriers such as stigma or discrimination, not knowing who to speak to or previous experience of support making them worried, in comparison to 2022.

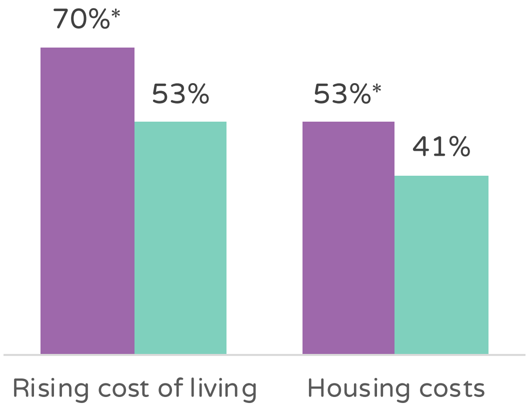
Experience of Mental Health Condition

No Experience of Mental Health Condition

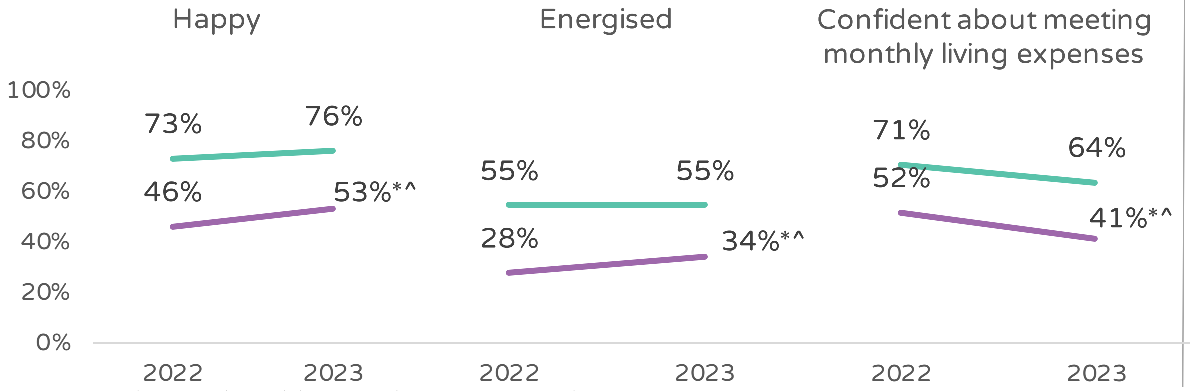
Overall mental health rating 2023



Felt big impact on mental health of…



Over last 3 months, felt…

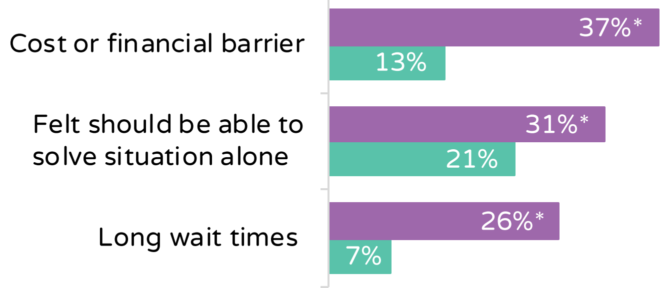


Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

76% needed support or information

59% obtained support or information

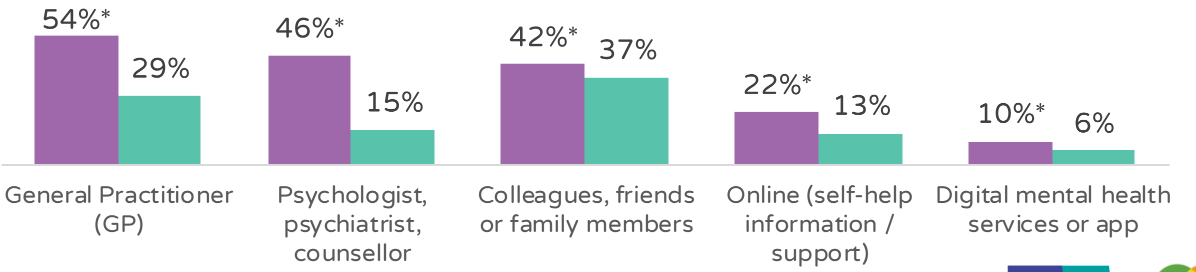
72% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



Promisingly, there has been a decrease in some barriers:

- Fear of stigma or discrimination (20% to 13%^)
- Didn't know who to speak to (14% to 9%^)
- Previous experience of support made me worried (22% to 16%^)

Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months



*significant difference between people with and without mental health diagnosis 2023 at 95% CI
^significant difference between people with mental health diagnosis 2022 to 2023 at 95% CI

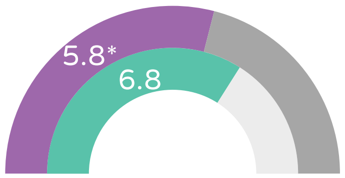
LGBTQI+ ADULTS

2023 results for this group mirror findings from 2022. In 2023, LGBTQI+ Australians reported a significantly lower overall mental health rating in comparison to Australians who don't identify as LGBTQI+ (5.8 vs 6.8), and are also significantly less likely to report feeling part of a community (39% vs 46%) or have been confident about meeting monthly living expenses over the past three months (48% vs 58%). Similarly, LGBTQI+ Australians were more likely to agree that the rising cost of living is having a big impact on their mental health (68% vs. 58% of non-LGBTQI+). When it comes to barriers to accessing mental health and wellbeing support, LGBTQI+ Australians were more likely to report cost or financial barriers as well as not feeling their problem was worthy of someone else's help in comparison to their non LGBTQI+ counterparts (32% vs 20% and 23% vs 14%). When this group have accessed support, they were significantly more likely than non-LGBTQI+ Australians to report that they accessed digital mental health services or apps (14% vs 7%).

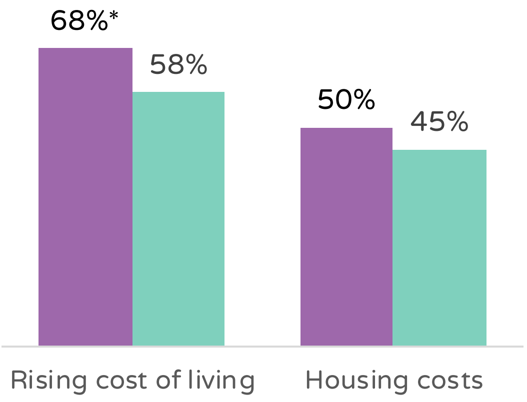
LGBTQI+

Non-LGBTQI+

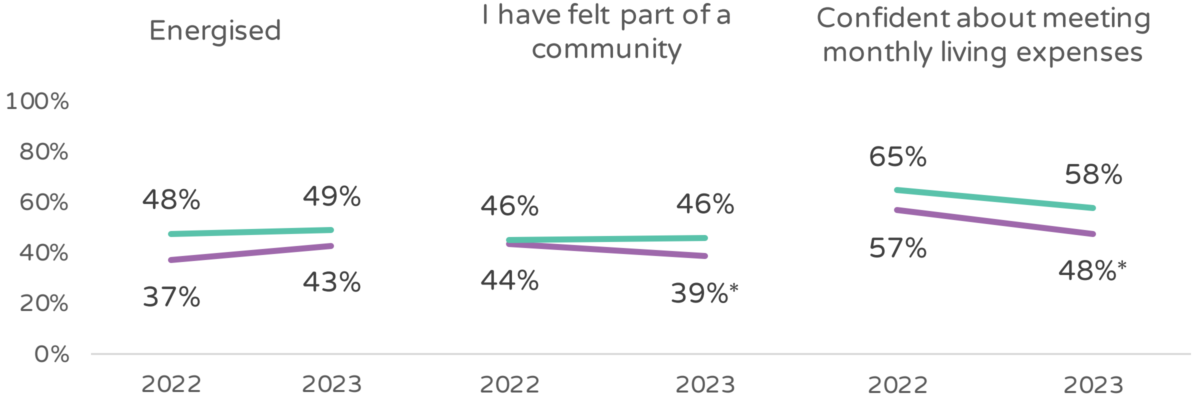
Overall mental health rating 2023



Felt big impact on mental health of…



Over last 3 months, felt…

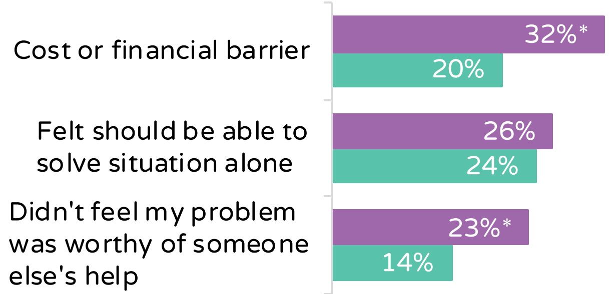


Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

71% needed support or information

52% obtained support or information

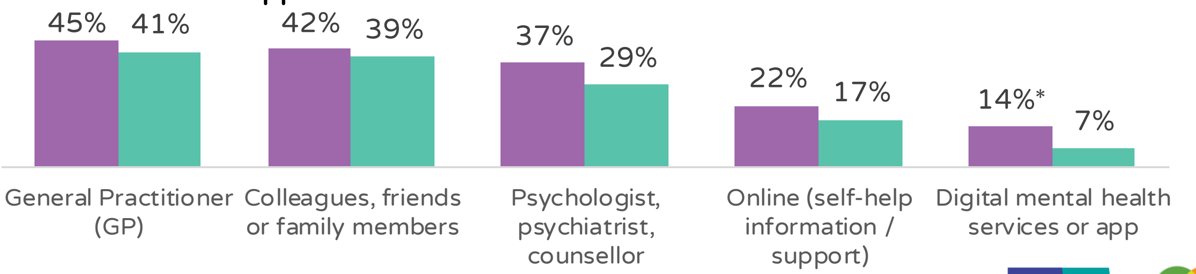
65% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



Promisingly, there has been a decrease in some barriers:

- Cost or financial barrier (39% to 32%)
- Long wait times (28% to 21%)
- I didn't know who to speak to (14% to 9%)
- Previous experience of mental health services made me worried about accessing support (24% to 17%)

Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months



*significant difference between LGBTQI+ and Non-LGBTQI+ 2023 at 95% CI
^significant difference between LGBTQI+ 2022 to 2023 at 95% CI

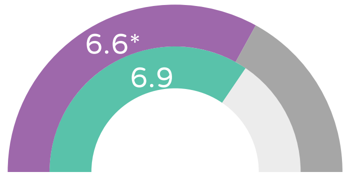
FEMALE GENDER

As in 2022, Australians who identify as female reported a significantly lower mental health rating in comparison to those who identify as male (6.6 vs 6.9). Females were significantly more likely than males to report that the rising cost of living has had a big impact on their mental health (62% vs 55%). Additionally, females are significantly less likely to agree to having felt happy, safe from global threats and confident about meeting monthly living expenses (71% vs 66%, 62% vs 54% and 60% vs 53%). When it comes to seeking mental health support, females were significantly more likely to access a GP, colleagues, friends or family members as well as a psychologist, psychiatrist or counsellor, compared to their male counterparts. Despite females being more likely to report needing support or information (52% vs 48%), they were significantly more likely to report several barriers to accessing support, such as feeling they should be able to solve a situation alone (27% vs 21%), cost or financial barriers (24% vs 18%) or long wait times (16% vs 10%). Promisingly, there have been several significant decreases in barriers to support access for women in 2023 compared to 2022.

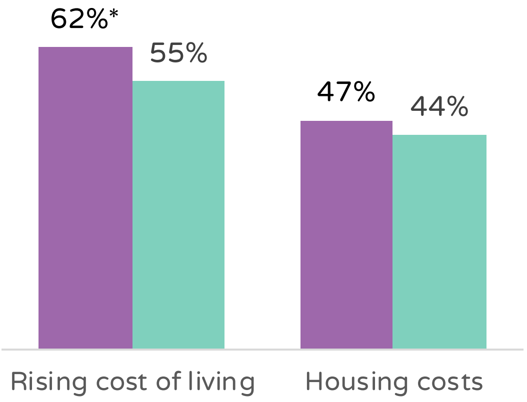
Female

Male

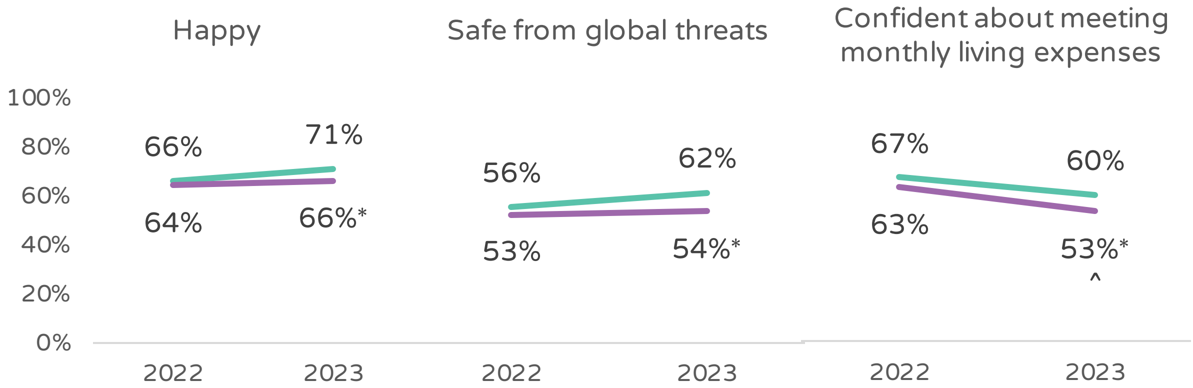
Overall mental health rating 2023



Felt big impact on mental health of...



Over last 3 months, felt...

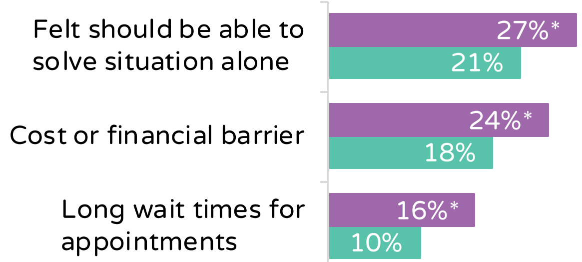


Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

48% of males and 52% of females needed support or information

37% of males and 39% of females obtained support or information

47% of males and 54% of females felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



Promisingly, there has been a decrease in some barriers for females:

- Previous experience of support made me worried (11% to 8%^)
- Didn't know who to speak to (9% to7%^)
- Support wasn't available in my area (6% to 4%^)
- Discouraged by people in my life (3% to 1%^)
- Support needed wasn't available (6% to 4%^)

Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months

*significant difference Female and Male 2023 at 95% CI
^significant difference between 2022 to 2023 at 95% CI

Note: 1% of the sample identified as 'other'. 'Other' gender refers to those who identify as non-binary, use a different term or preferred not to answer a gender identity question. 'Other' gender was not used in analysis throughout the report as the sample size for this cohort was too small to conduct meaningful analyses

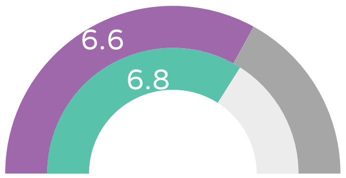
CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD)

As with 2022, CALD Australians reported a lower mental health rating in comparison with non-CALD Australians (6.6 vs 6.8). This group are showing decreases in feeling part of a community and confident about meeting monthly living expenses compared to non-CALD Australians. When CALD Australians have accessed mental health supports over the last three months, they were significantly less likely than non-CALD Australians to access a GP (34% vs 44%), however they were significantly more likely to seek these supports at a church, temple or religious community (11% vs 5%).

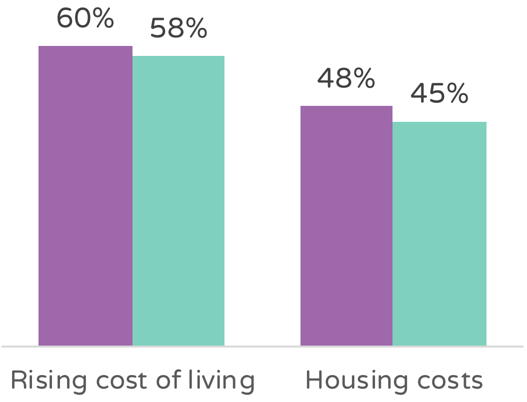
CALD

Non-CALD

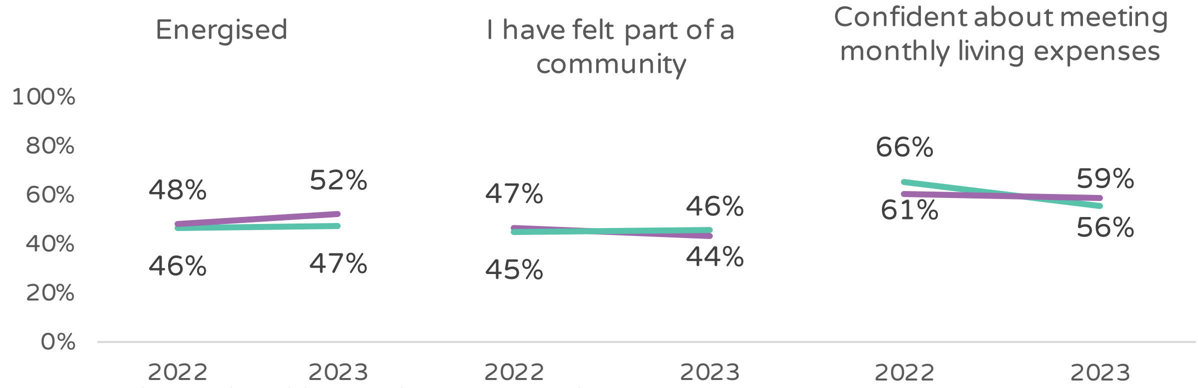
Overall mental health rating 2023



Felt big impact on mental health of...



Over last 3 months, felt...

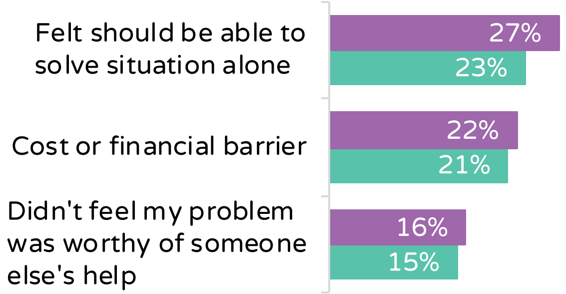


Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

61% needed support or information

49% obtained support or information

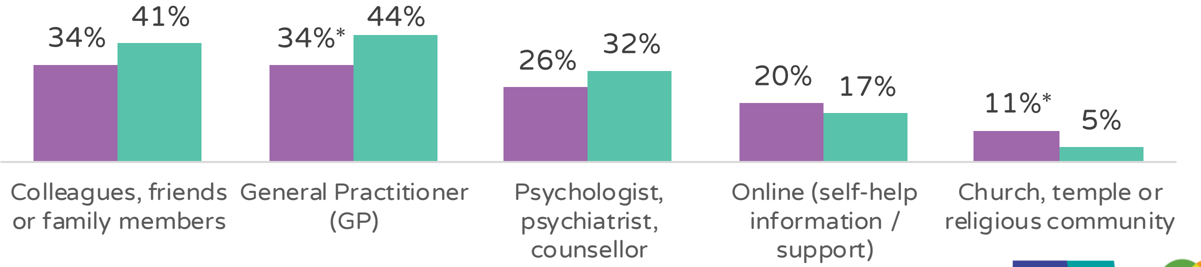
58% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



Promisingly, there has been a decrease in some barriers:

- Long wait times (15% to 12%)
- Didn't know who to speak to (12% to 9%)
- Previous experience of mental health services made me worried about accessing support (9% to 6%)

Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months



Note: Respondents were classified as CALD if they answered 'yes' to 'do you speak a language other than English at home?' or their country of birth was not Australia nor those classified by the ABS as 'main English speaking countries'

*significant difference between CALD and Non-CALD 2023 at 95% CI
^significant difference between CALD 2022 to 2023 at 95% CI

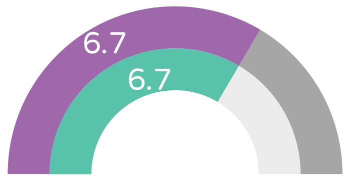
REGIONAL AND REMOTE

Encouragingly, Australians living in regional and remote areas reported the same level of overall mental health as those living in metropolitan areas (6.7 and 6.7). In fact, the two groups report no significant differences, with improvements in mental health and wellbeing noted for those living in regional and remote areas compared to 2022. Among Australians in regional and remote areas, happiness and the feeling of being safe from global threats has significantly improved since 2022 (63% vs 69% and 52% vs 58%). They were also significantly less likely to face certain barriers to support such as not knowing who to speak to or the impact of a negative previous experience compared to last year. However, consistent with other groups, those in regional and remote areas are feeling significantly less confident about meeting monthly living expenses in 2023 (54% down from 61% in 2022).

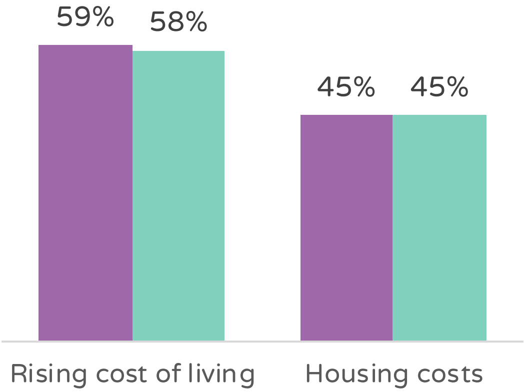
Regional / Remote

Metro

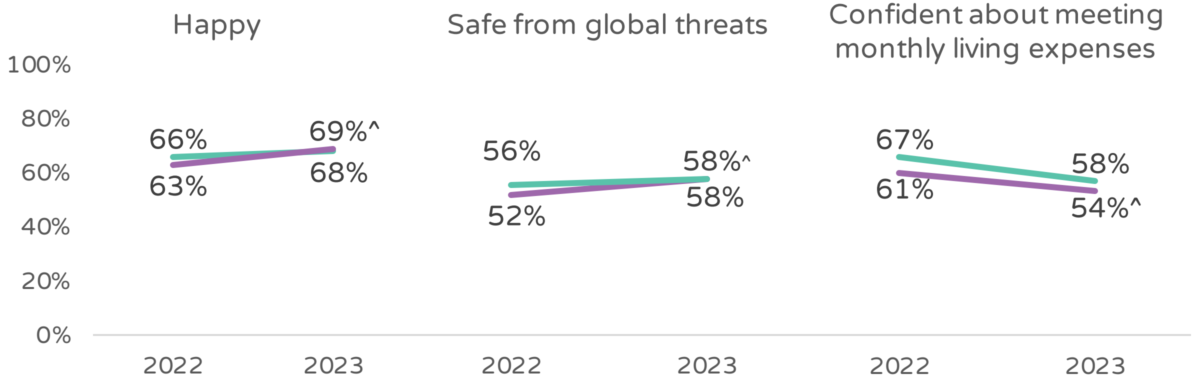
Overall mental health rating 2023



Felt big impact on mental health of…



Over last 3 months, felt…

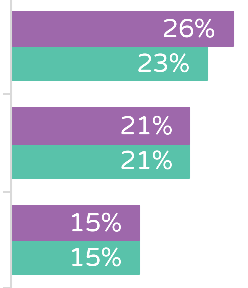


Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

49% needed support or information

36% obtained support or information

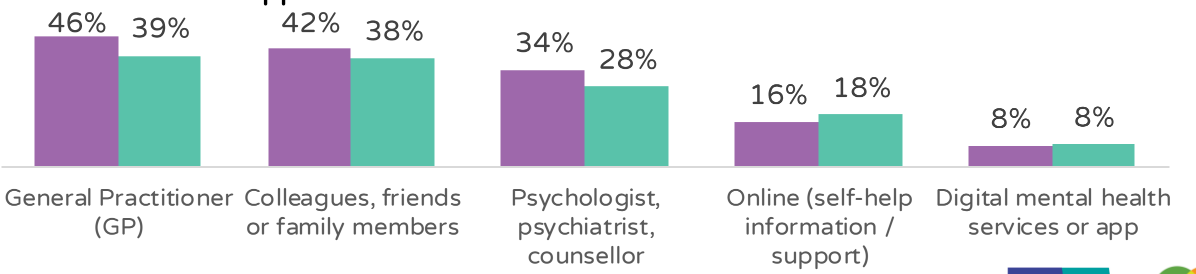
50% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



Promisingly, there has been a decrease in some barriers:

- I didn't know who to speak to (11% to 7%^)
- Impact of negative previous experience (11% to 7%^)

Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months



*significant difference between Regional and Remote 2023 at 95% CI
^significant difference between Regional 2022 to 2023 at 95% CI

Note: Regional/remote was categorised based on respondents' postcodes - those who did not live in major cities or metro areas were considered 'Regional/remote'.

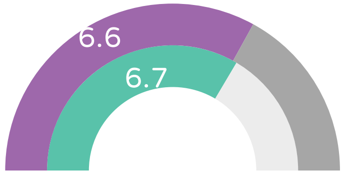
INCOME GROUPS

People in the lowest income quartile reported lower overall mental health rating than the average of those in higher income q uartiles (6.6 vs 6.7), though this was not statistically significant. Low income earners were significantly less likely to report feeling energised (39% vs 50%). Surprisingly, low in come earners are less likely than the average of other income groups to have felt that housing costs have had a big impact on their mental health (41% vs 47%), this could be relate d to a high proportion of this group being aged over 60 and more likely to have stable housing. Low income earners are however significantly less likely to feel confident about m eeting monthly living expenses in comparison to other income groups (48% vs 61%). When accessing support over the past 3 months, low income earners were significantly more likely to access a digital mental health service or app (9% vs 4%), and significantly less likely to see a psychologist, psychiatrist or counsellor (23% vs 32%), or access suppo rt on online (13% vs 21%) compared to other income groups.

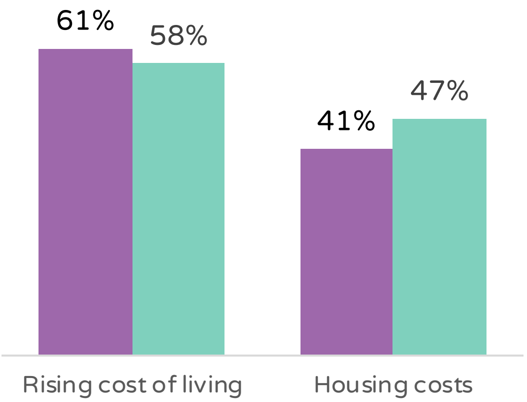
Low income

Other income groups

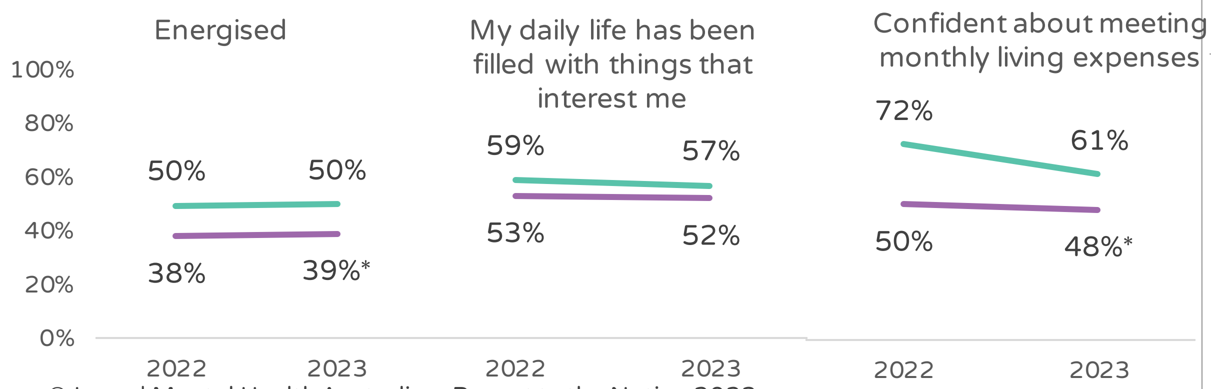
Overall mental health rating 2023



Felt big impact on mental health of…



Over last 3 months, felt…

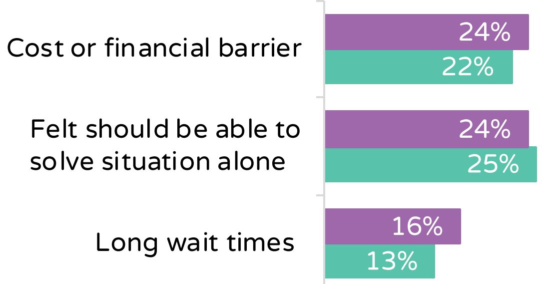


Barriers to accessing mental health & wellbeing supports

50% needed support or information

35% obtained support or information

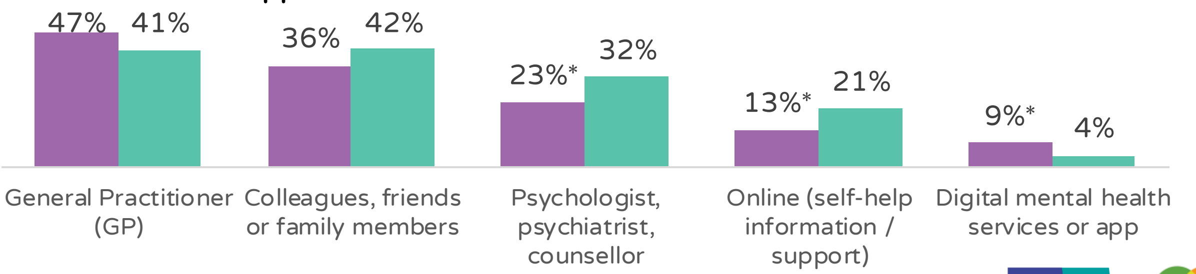
54% felt they had faced a barrier to accessing support over the past 12 months



Promisingly, there has been a decrease in some barriers:

- Fear of stigma or discrimination (11% to 6%^)
- Previous experience of support made me worried (13% to 8%^)
- People in my life discouraged me from seeking professional help (3% to 1%^)

Mental health supports accessed over last 3 months



*significant difference between Low Income and Above-Low Income 2023 at 95% CI
^significant difference between Low Income 2022 to 2023 at 95% CI

5

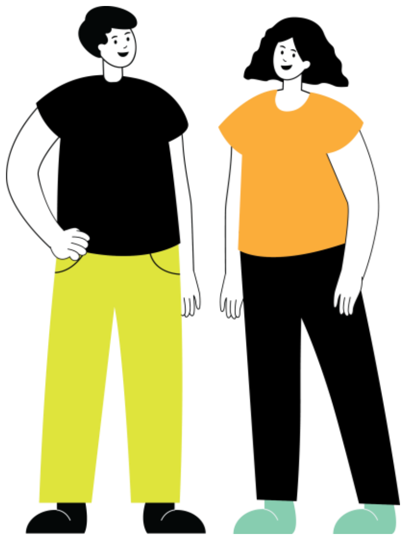
BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

In 2022 Mental Health Australia (MHA) partnered with Ipsos to produce an independent benchmark survey aimed at understanding the mental health and wellbeing of Australians. The 2022 Report to the Nation outlined experiences and perceptions of mental health among Australians of all ages across the country.

Ipsos developed this survey with the help of members from the community through cognitive interviews, to ensure questions and themes reflected current experiences of mental health in Australia.

The 2023 Report to the Nation marks the second year of the study and the beginning of timeseries data. The 2023 iteration provides the ability to compare back to the 2022 benchmark data, to analyse how the mental health and wellbeing of Australians has changed over time.



DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER IDENTITY

Male 48%

Female 51%

Other^ 1%

FIRST NATIONS STATUS

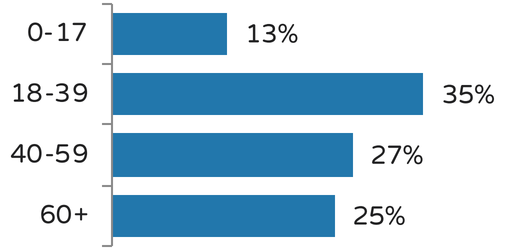
7%

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

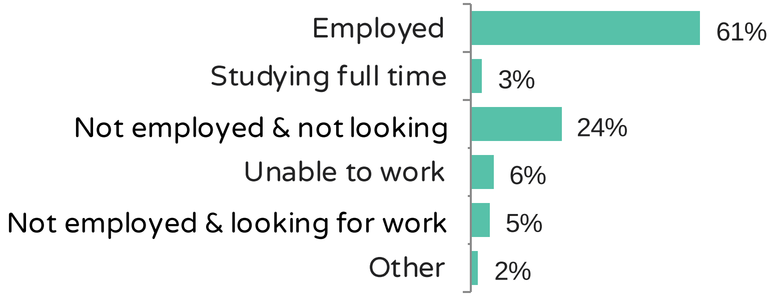
CALD STATUS

21%

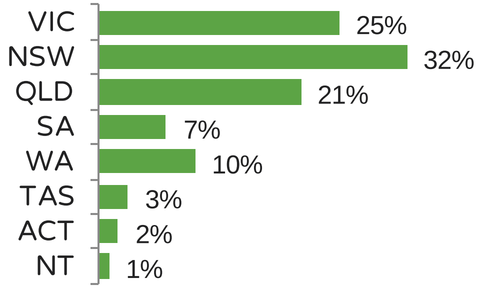
AGE



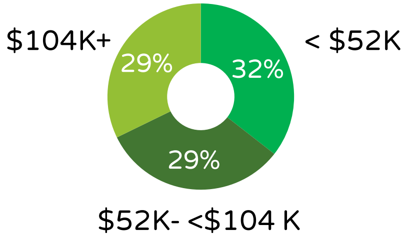
EMPLOYMENT STATUS*



LOCATION



HOUSEHOLD INCOME BEFORE TAX*



LGBTQI+ *

11%

MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

32%

CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION

27%

MENTAL HEALTH CARER

26%

Base n=2,441. *Asked only of adults 14+. Note: 'Other' gender refers to those who identify as non-binary, use a different term or preferred not to answer a gender identity question. 'Other' gender was not used in the analysis throughout the report as the sample size for this cohort was too small to conduct a meaningful analyses

METHODOLOGY

Click HERE for a more detailed methodology

SURVEY DESIGN

Ipsos and Mental Health Australia worked in collaboration to design the questionnaire tool. The 2023 questionnaire is similar to 2022 with minor updates made, and was designed around the domains of the Contributing Life Framework to provide a holistic measure of mental health and wellbeing. The domains are:

- Thriving, not just surviving
- Having something meaningful to do, and something to look forward to
- Connection to family, friends, culture and community
- Feeling safe, stable and secure
- Access to effective support, care and treatment

Three versions of the survey were designed:

- The 'adult' survey, for participants aged 14 and over
- A simplified version of the 'adult' survey for those aged 9 to 13, completed by young people about their own mental health and wellbeing
- A children's survey for those aged 0 to 8, completed by parents about the mental health and wellbeing of their child, which included six questions for the child to answer directly if they were able.

DATA COLLECTION

For the 2023 data collection, participants completed the questionnaire online, with recruitment of participants being conducted via an online panel.

If the participant was under 18 years of age, parental consent was attained prior to completion of the survey.

A total of n=2,441 responses were collected, consisting of n=308 aged 0-17; and n=2,133 aged 18+ (the 'adult' sample.)

Fieldwork was completed between 8th June and 23rd June 2023.

In order for the results to reflect a nationally representative sample, data was weighted by location, age, gender and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status, in line with population statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

SIGNIFICANCE TESTING; INTERPRETING THIS REPORT

SIGNIFICANCE TESTING

A ‘significant difference’ means we can be 95% confident the difference observed between the two samples reflects a true difference in the population of interest and is not a result of chance. Such descriptions are not value judgements on the importance of the difference. The reader is encouraged to make a judgement as to whether the differences are ‘meaningful’ or not.

Where significance testing has occurred between pairs such as male vs. female, this has been undertaken as an independent samples test. However, where significance testing has occurred between more than two categories within a group, such as by age, the significance testing used tests one category against the average of the others that are not in that category combined. Such a test is ideal for multiple comparisons as it reduces the likelihood of displaying a significant difference where one does not exist.

INTERPRETING THIS REPORT

The symbols * and ^ have been used throughout the report to show a statistically significant difference within the results. Below is an example of the significance placed on 2023 results to compare to 2022 results, as well as the difference within 2023 results for a group of interest.

*significant difference between First and Non-First Nation Australians 2023 at 95% CI
^significant difference between First Nation Australians 2022 to 2023 at 95% CI

As noted above, testing for adult ages has been applied using tests that compare one category to the average of all others. This report shows the age group of interest compared to the overall average for age (including the age group of interest), to make it easier for the reader and to ensure consistency between slides analysing the adult age groups.

Due to rounding, responses may not always add up to 100%, and Nets (e.g., ‘strongly agree’ + ‘agree’) may not appear to be an exact addition of the two responses included.

Mental Health Australia

For further information, contact
policy@mhaustralia.org