



Office of the Information Commissioner  
Queensland

# Cross Jurisdictional Information Access Study

## Queensland

### June 2021



WOOLCOTT  
RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT



# RESEARCH DESIGN

**Five jurisdictions from across Australia including Queensland (QLD), commissioned Woolcott Research and Engagement to investigate awareness and experience of information access rights amongst the general public.**

A mixed mode survey amongst n=363 QLD residents aged 18+ years was conducted between 15-27 June 2021 utilising an online panel and Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI).

Quotas were set by location (Brisbane/Regional QLD), gender and age, and data was post-weighted to reflect the latest ABS population estimates.

Significant differences in results at the 95% confidence level between the 2019 and 2021 results are shown in **GREEN** (increased significantly) or **RED** (decreased significantly).

Due to rounding, percentages may not always add to 100.

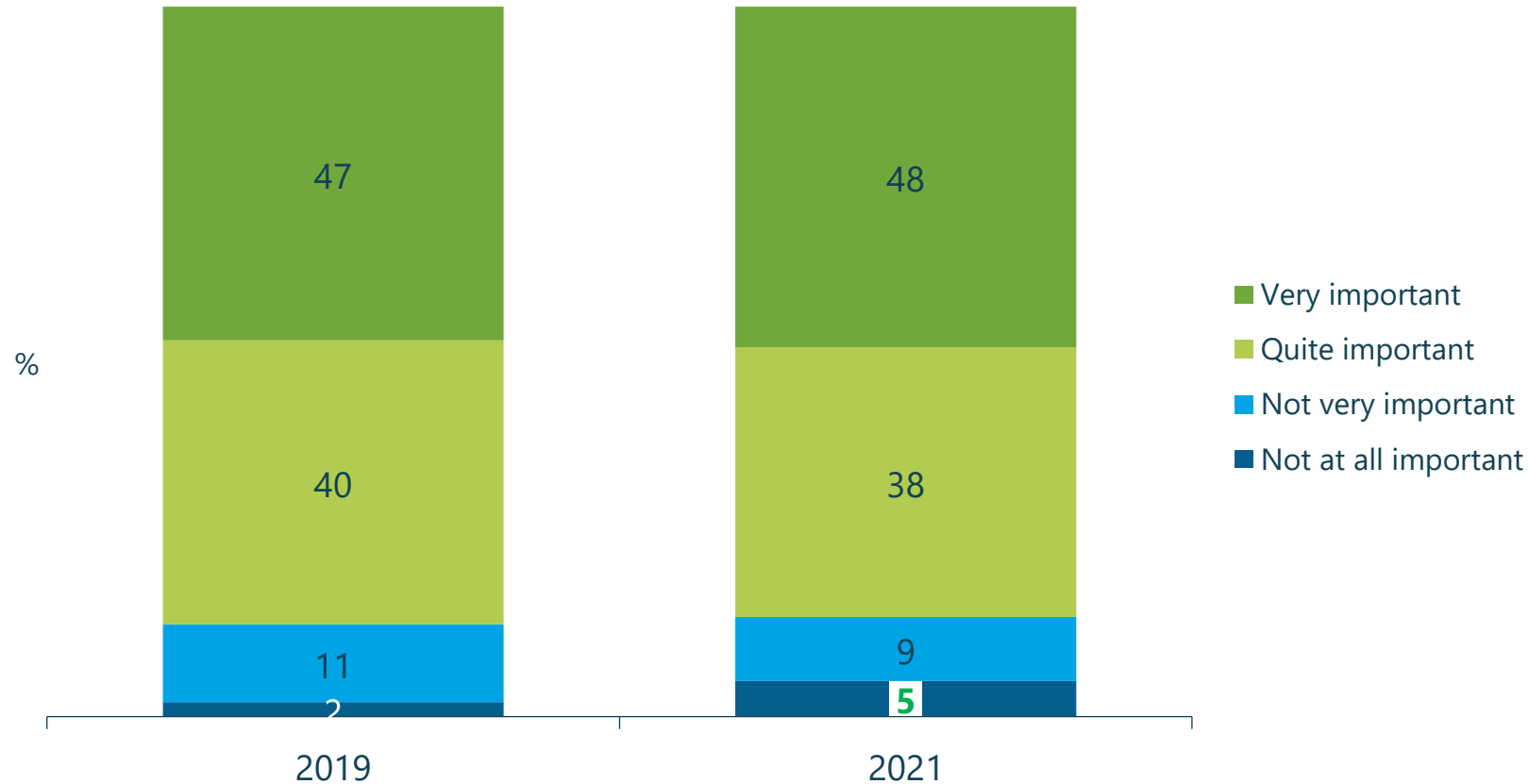


# INFORMATION ACCESS





# IMPORTANCE OF HAVING THE RIGHT TO ACCESS GOVERNMENT INFORMATION



- Respondents continue to value the right to access information held by the Queensland government, with almost half indicating this was very important.
- Respondents aged over 55 years were more likely to indicate it was very important (60%).

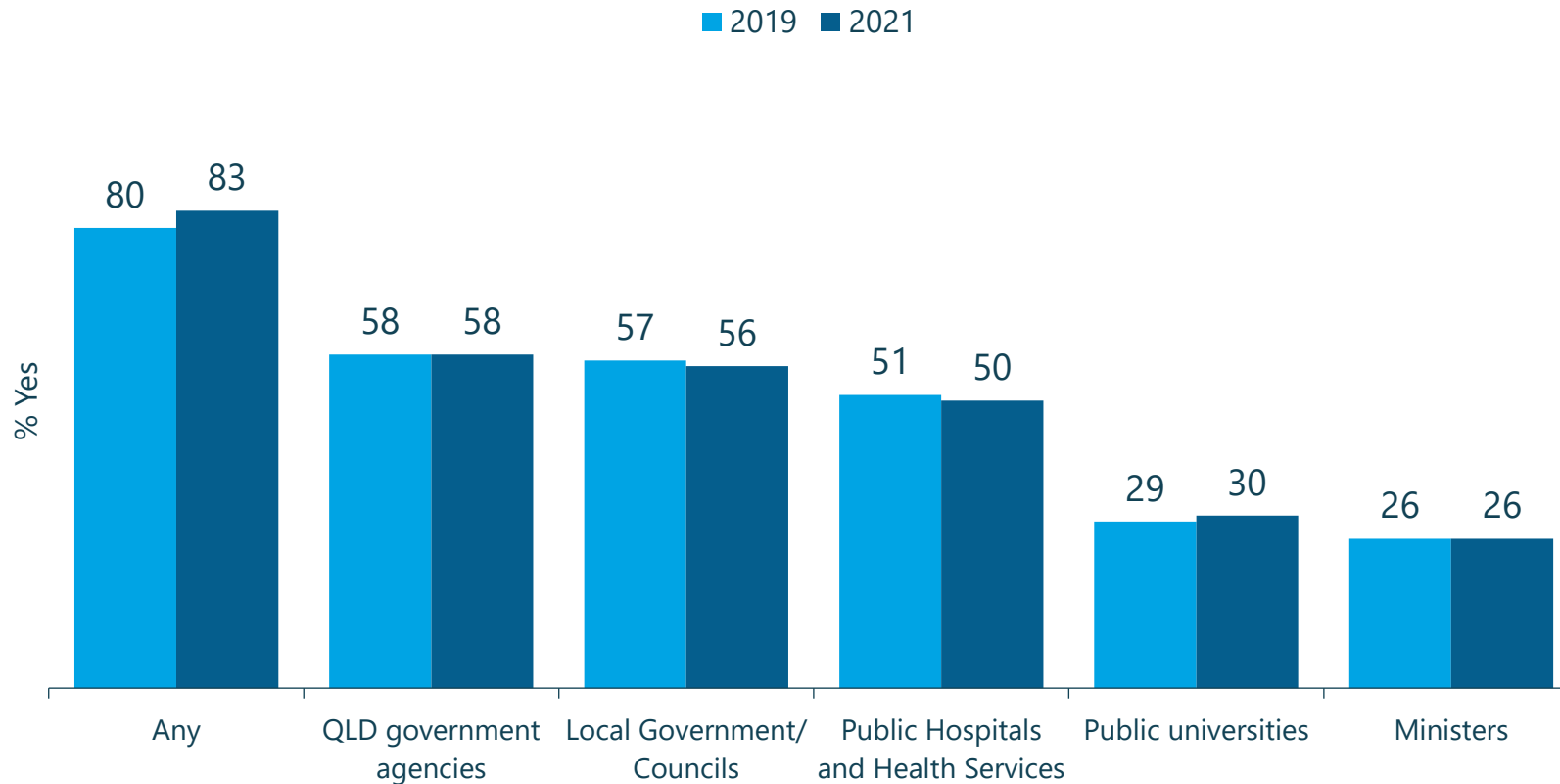
Q3. How important is it to you that you have a right to access government information? *This applies to all publicly available information, not just your own personal data.*

Base: All respondents (2019: n=350 , 2021: n=363)



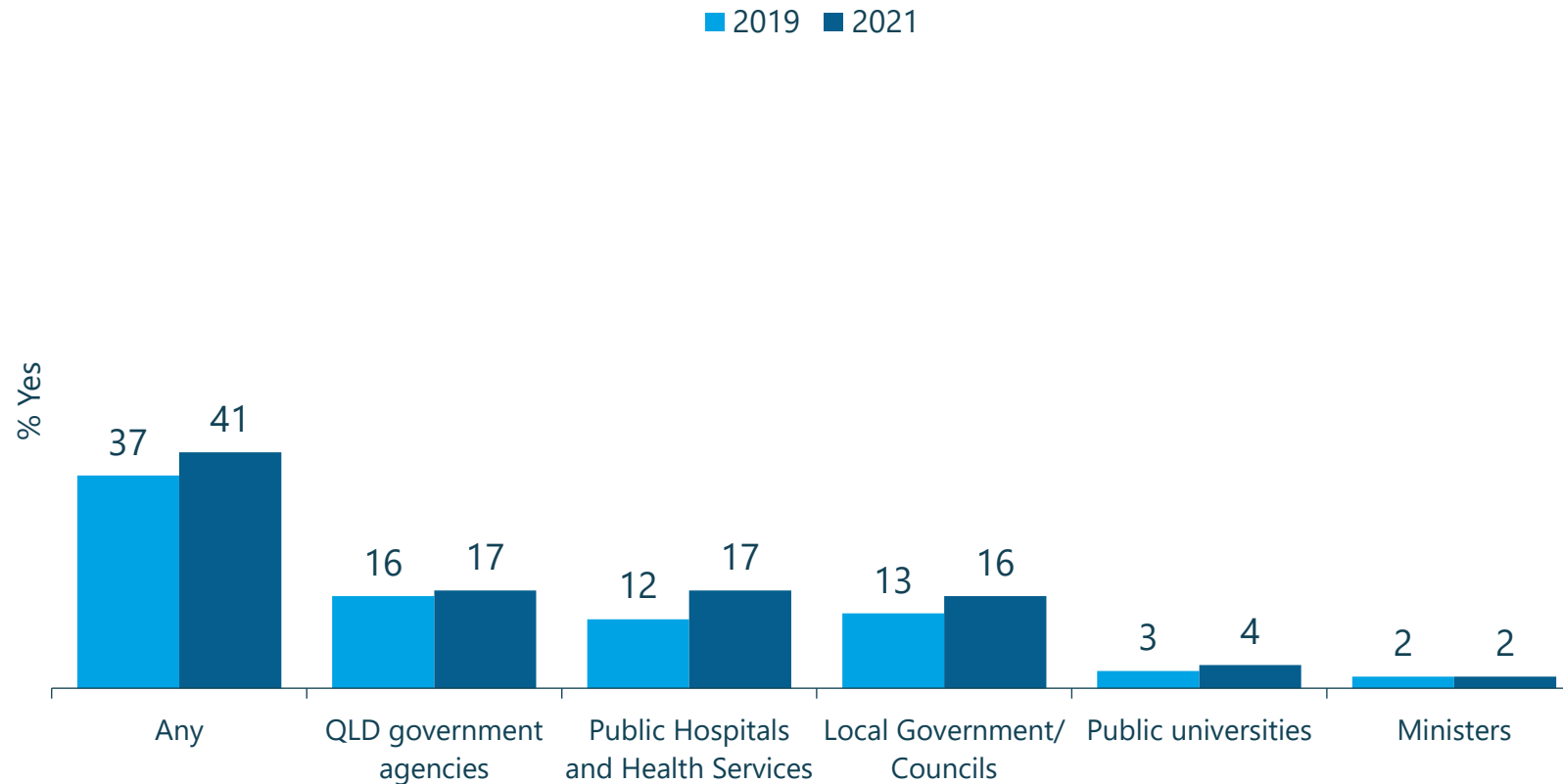
- More than four out of five were aware that they could access information held by at least one of the listed agencies.
- Awareness of the right to access information was highest regarding QLD Government agencies and Local Government/ Councils and lowest for Public Universities and Ministers.

# AWARENESS OF RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION



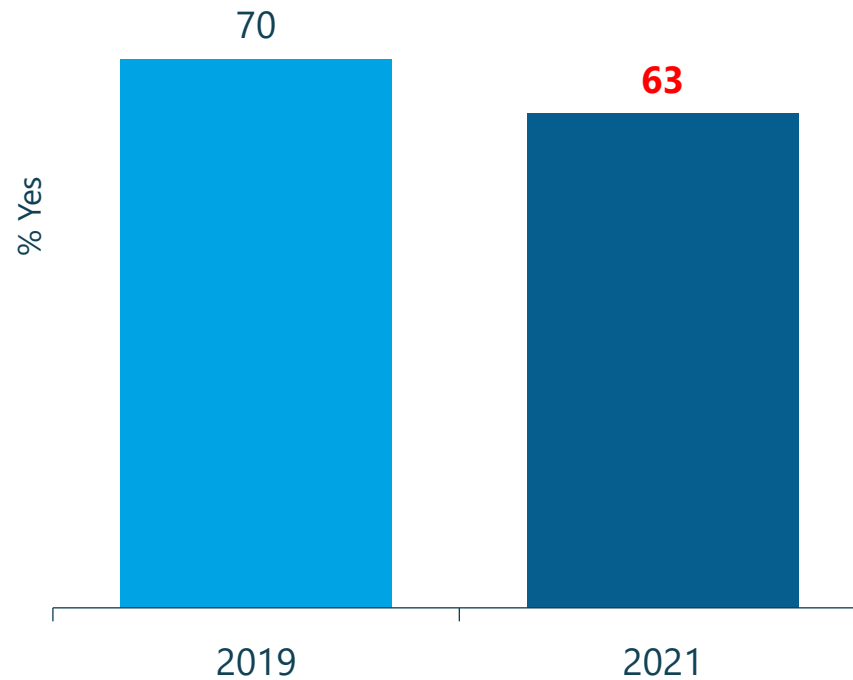
Q4. Did you know, under the Queensland's Right to Information and Information Privacy Law, you have a right to access information held by the following agencies?  
Base: All respondents (2019: n=350 , 2021: n=363)

# ATTEMPTS TO ACCESS INFORMATION



- Two fifths of respondents had attempted to access information held by a listed agency.
- Those aged over 55 years were less likely to have tried to access information (29%).

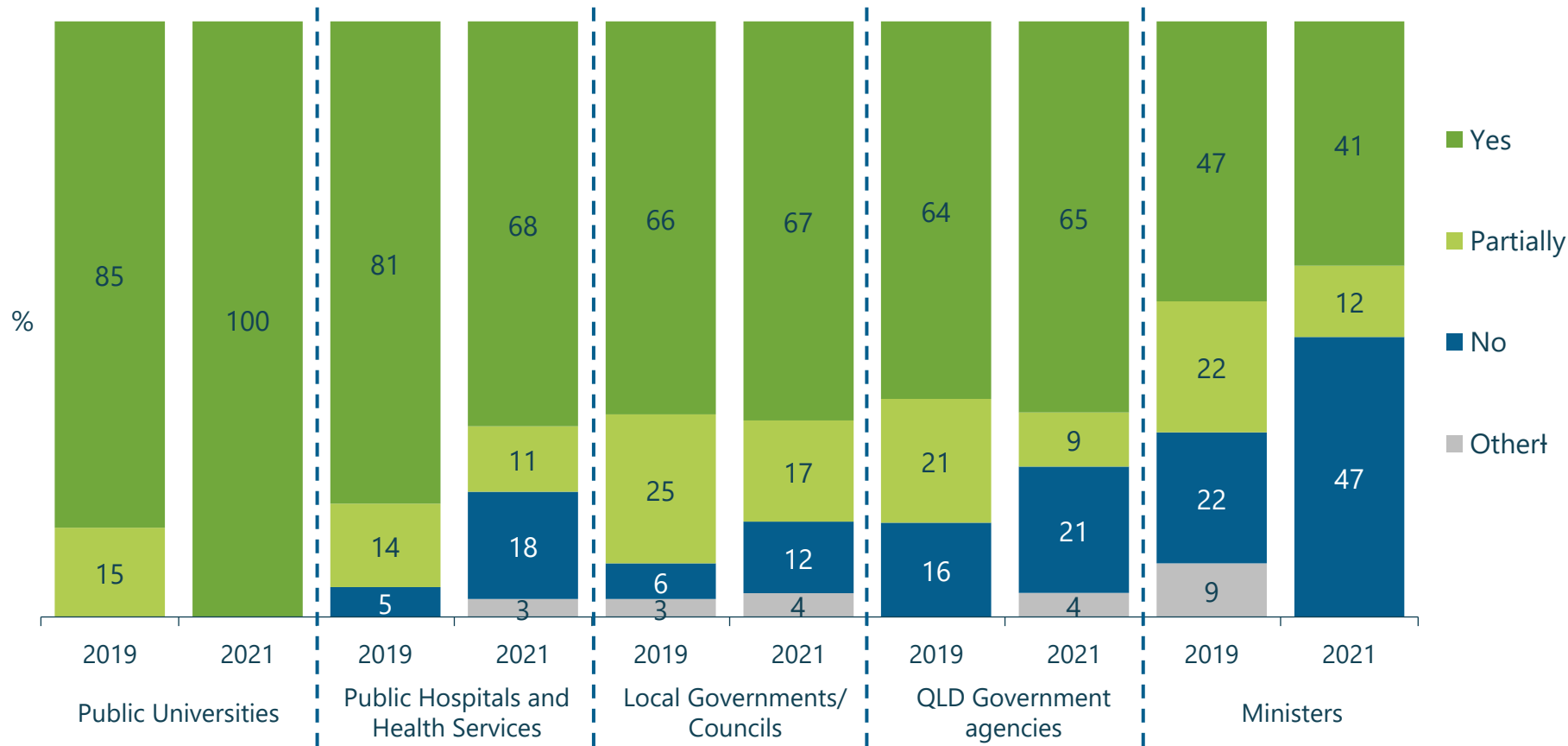
# SUCCESS IN ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS INFORMATION



- Almost two thirds of respondents who had attempted to access information in the last three years successfully gained access at least once. This was a significant decrease from 2019.
- There were no significant differences by age or gender.



# SUCCESS IN ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS INFORMATION BY AGENCY



- Success in attempting to access information was consistent with 2019, with respondents always being able to access information from Public Universities and least successful at accessing information from Ministers.
- There were no significant differences by age or gender.

Q6. Were you successful in accessing information from ...?  
Base: Respondents who tried to access information in the last year  
(2019: Local Governments/Councils n=47, QLD Government agencies n=54, Public Hospitals and Health Services n=43, Public Universities n=7\*, Ministers n=10\*)  
(2021: Local Governments/Councils n=59, QLD Government agencies n=59, Public Hospitals and Health Services n=57, Public Universities n=13\*, Ministers n=9\*)  
\* CAUTION SMALL BASE SIZE





# ONLINE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

	2019 (n=350) %	2021 (n=363) %
Policies and procedures	61	58
Information about decision making processes affecting the community	58	58
Statistics and datasets	50	50
Being directed to online action, for example, obtaining a service or conducting a transaction online	56	49
Financial information, for example, expenditure, procurement and contracts	50	49

- Interest in accessing government agency information and/or assistance was high across all types of information and assistance.



- Most were encouraged to access information in the least formal way, while a fifth were told to make a formal application.
- The proportion who didn't contact the agency and went through the formal channels directly increased in 2021 to almost a third.
- There were no significant differences by the agencies involved.

# LEAST FORMAL REQUEST PROCESSES

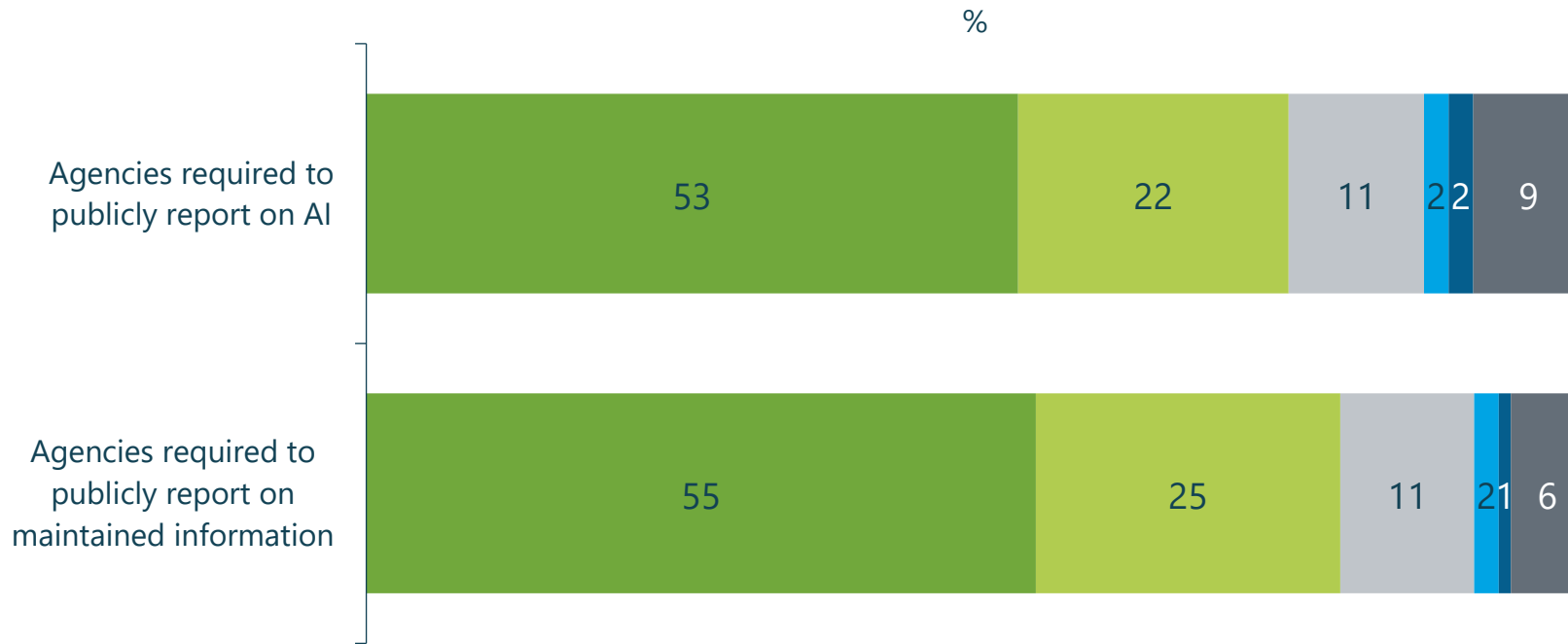
	2019 (n=129) %	2021 (n=144) %
Yes they made it easy to find it on the website	32	27
Yes, they explained how I could request the information by email or a verbal request	23	19
Yes, they showed me how to request the information using an informal access process	20	14
No, they told me I had to make a formal access application under the Right to Information Act or Information Privacy Act	19	20
No, I didn't contact the agency before I made a formal access application	15	29

Q8. In the process of requesting information, has the government agency encouraged you to obtain it in the least formal way?  
Base: All respondents who had tried to access information (2019: n=129, 2021: n=144)



# AGREEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC REPORTING

■ Strongly agree ■ Slightly agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Slightly disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know



- Most respondents agreed that agencies should be required to publicly report on AI systems used and information they maintain.
- There were no significant differences by age or gender.

Q9. Governments are increasingly using data, algorithms and other forms of artificial intelligence to inform decisions, for example subsidy and or payment calculations. To what extent do you agree that government agencies should be required to publicly report on any systems used to inform agency decisions that impact individuals?

Q10. To what extent do you agree that government agencies should publicly report on the information they maintain?

Base: All respondents (2021 n=363)

Question added in 2021



# DEMOGRAPHICS





# GENDER AND AGE

	2019 % (n=350)	2021 % (n=363)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	48	52
Male	52	48
Gender neutral†	Not an option in 2019	-
Prefer not to indicate‡		<1
<b>Age</b>		
18-24	6	8
25-34	22	20
35-44	15	20
45-54	18	15
55-64	11	8
65-74	18	11
75+	10	17

Q1. Which of the following age brackets do you belong to?

Q2. Do you identify as being...?

Base: All respondents (2019 n=350, 2021 n=363)

†Options added in 2021



# WORKING STATUS AND MAIN LANGUAGE SPOKEN

	2019 % (n=350)	2021 % (n=363)
<b>Working status</b>		
Working full time	34	38
Retired	5	28
Working part time	13	14
Engaged in home duties	34	8
Unemployed	9	7
Student	6	5
<b>Main language spoken at home</b>		
English	95	95
Cantonese/Mandarin	1	1
Tagalog (Filipino)	1	1
Other	4	2

Q11. Which of these categories best describes you?

Q12. What is the main language spoken at home?

Base: All respondents (2019 n=350, 2021 n=363)

# SUMMARY

Over four in five respondents were aware of their right to access information held by at least one of the government agencies listed (83%), which was marginally higher than in 2019.

Just over two fifths had attempted to access information held by at least one of the Queensland government agencies (41%). Older respondents were less likely to have attempted to access information.

Of those who tried to access information, almost two thirds were successful (63%), which was significantly less than in 2019 (70%).

At least half of the respondents would like to access government agency information online, particularly policies and procedures (58%) and information on decision making processes (58%).

Most of those who tried to access information were encouraged to do so in the least formal way, however almost a third went straight to formal means without contacting the agency (29%).

Most respondents agreed that agencies should report on AI systems used to inform their decisions that impact individuals (75%) and the information they maintain (80%).



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