



COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY

June 2019



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

RESEARCH TEAM

JASMINE OZGE
ANNE-MARIE BOLLIER
PROFESSOR ANNE KAVANAGH
VAS KASIDIS
LAUREN KRNJACKI
GEORGIA KATSIKIS



ABOUT THE SURVEY

- First national survey on attitudes towards Australians with disability
- People with disability were part of the research team
- Examined **personally-held** and **perceived societal attitudes**
- The survey covered questions about attitudes including **beliefs, feelings and behaviours**
- Respondents were asked if the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements

WHO WAS INTERVIEWED?

2000 participants from across Australia

PRESENTATION STRUCTURE

1. Attitudes in workplaces and schools
2. Personally-held attitudes and beliefs
3. Perceptions of societal attitudes
4. Contact with people with disability
5. Summary
6. Research team reflections on process of research

NEUTRAL RESPONSES

Between 10-30% participants chose the neutral option which was neither agree nor disagree

POSSIBLE REASONS

- On the fence – could go either way
- Negative attitude in disguise (if personally-held attitudes)
- Don't know (societal-held attitude)

1

ATTITUDES IN WORKPLACES AND SCHOOLS

EMPLOYERS
SHOULD BE
ALLOWED TO
REFUSE TO
HIRE
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY
(personal attitude)

20%
Agree

26%

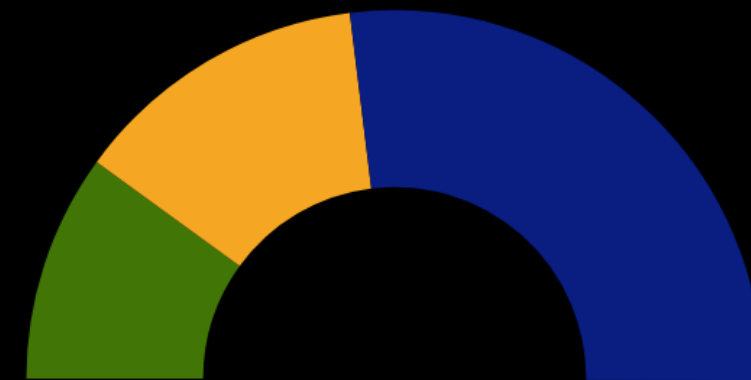
Neither

54%

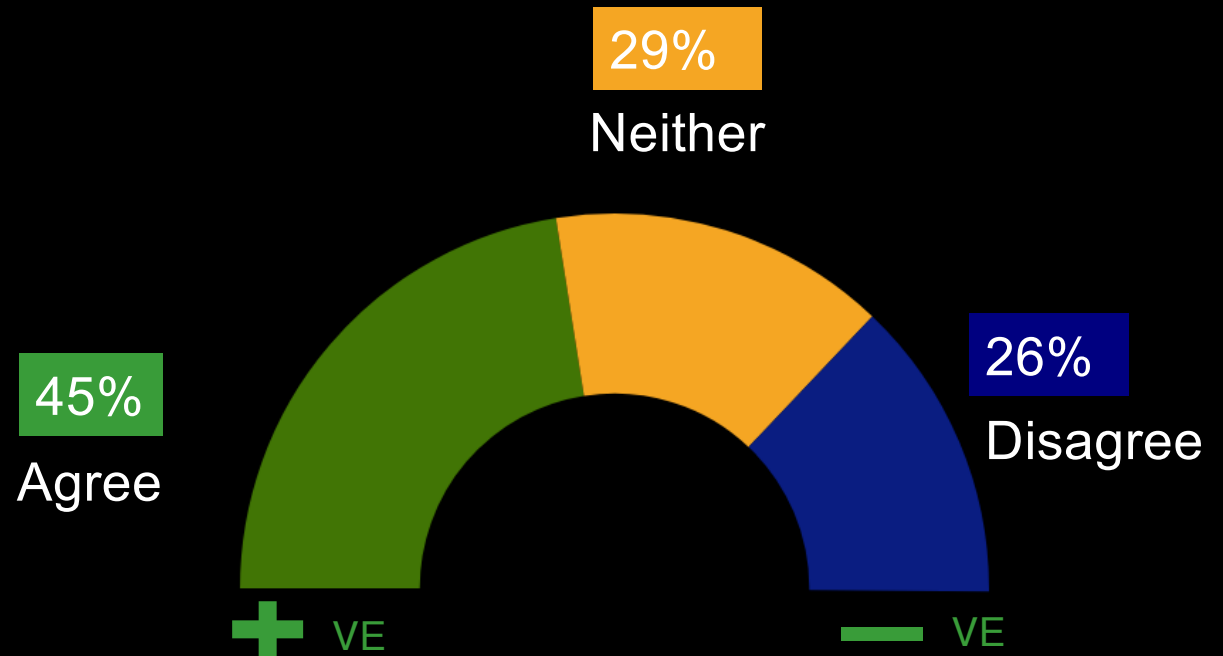
Disagree

— VE

+ VE



PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY
WORK AS
PRODUCTIVELY
AS PEOPLE
WITHOUT
DISABILITY
(personal attitude)



A photograph of several surgeons in an operating room, wearing blue scrubs, masks, and hairnets. They are gathered around a table with surgical instruments. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source coming from the surgical lights. The surgeons are focused on their work, and the atmosphere is professional and serious.

41% OF
PARTICIPANTS
THINK
WORKPLACES ARE
ACCEPTING OF
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY

(perception of societal attitude)

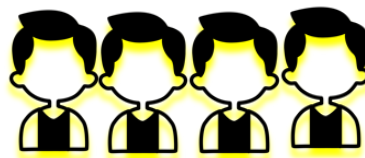
CHILDREN WITH
DISABILITY
SHOULD ONLY BE
EDUCATED AT
SPECIAL
SCHOOLS

13%



Agree

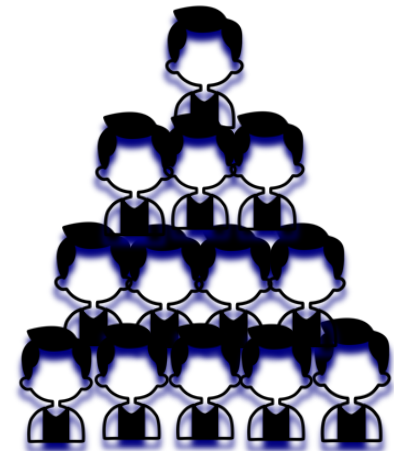
22%



Neutral

+ VE

65%



Disagree

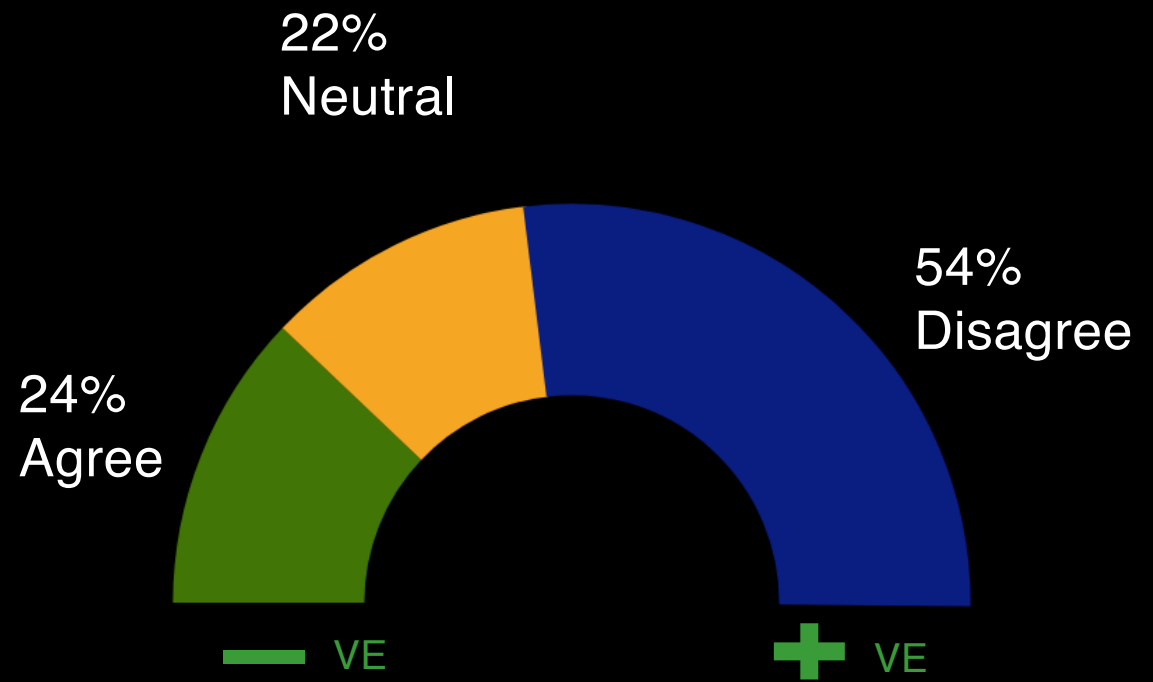
A row of empty swings hangs in a park. The swings have blue seats and black frames. The background is a soft-focus green landscape with trees and grass. The ground is covered in brown mulch.

**53% BELIEVE THAT
SCHOOLS ARE
ACCEPTING OF PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITY**

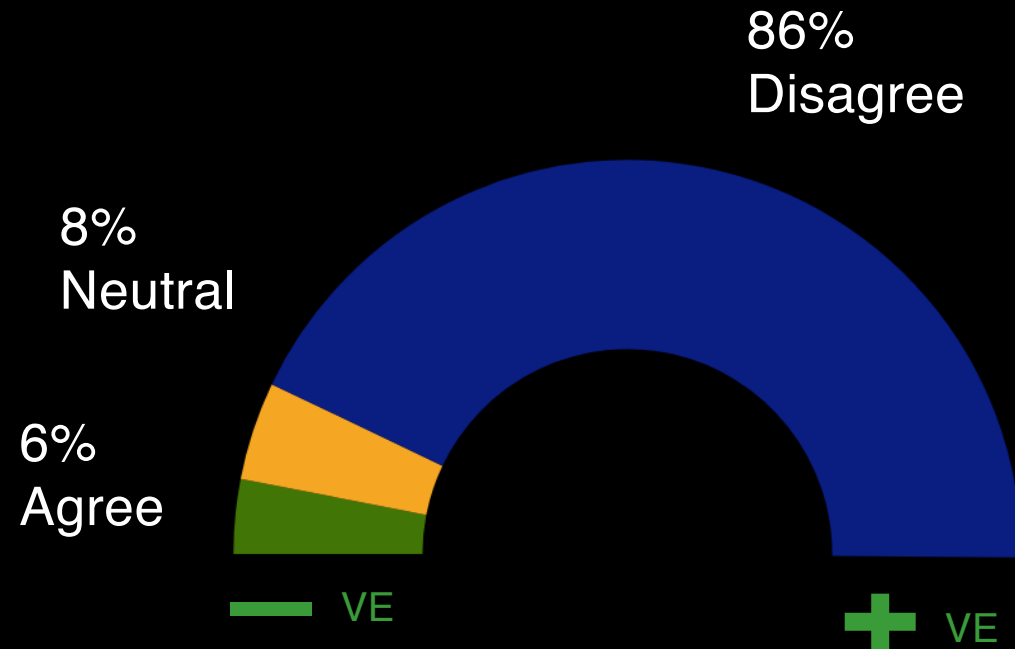
2

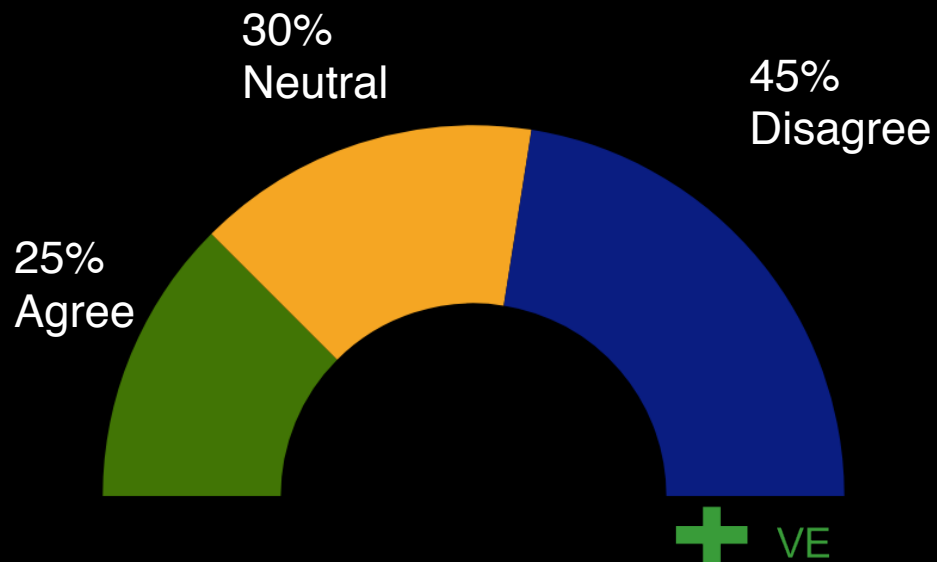
PERSONALLY-HELD ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY HAVE
LESS TO LOOK
FORWARD TO
THAN OTHERS

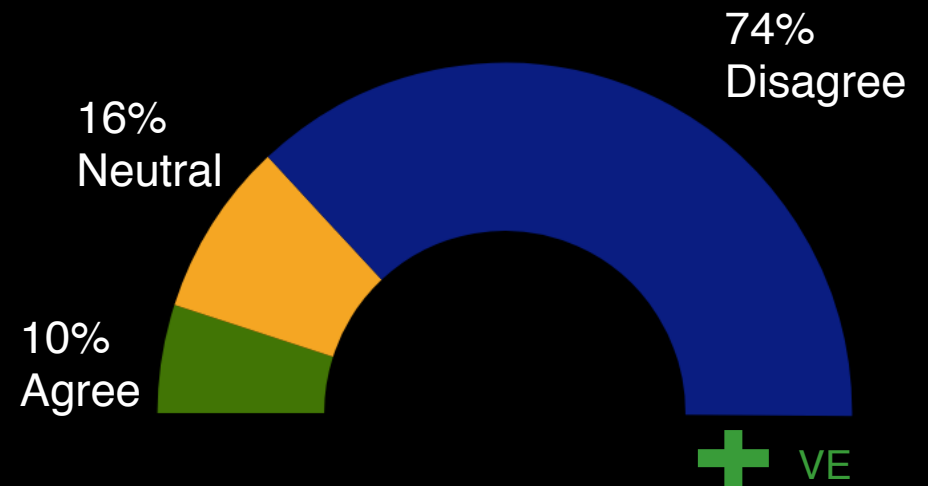


PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY
SHOULD NOT
BE OPTIMISITIC
ABOUT THEIR
FUTURES





PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY ARE A
BURDEN ON
THEIR FAMILY

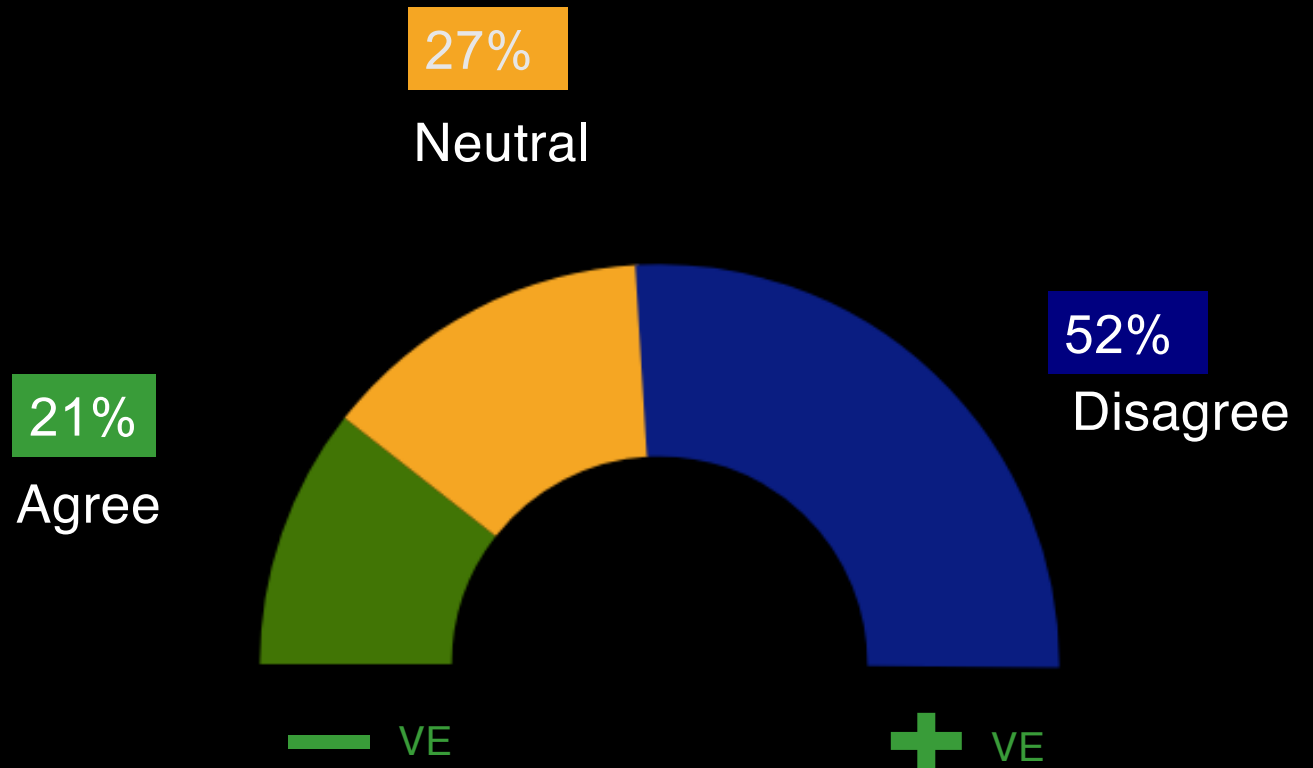


PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY ARE A
BURDEN ON
SOCIETY

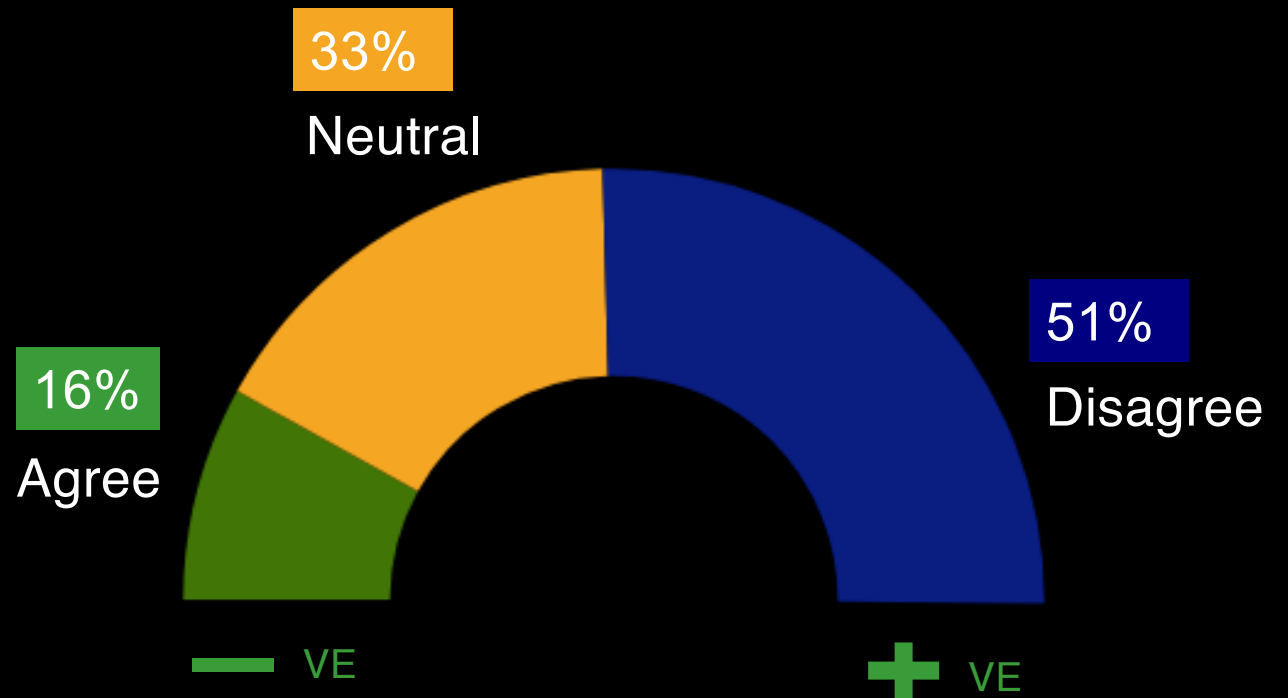
**55% THINK SOCIETY
IS STRENGTHENED
BY PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY**



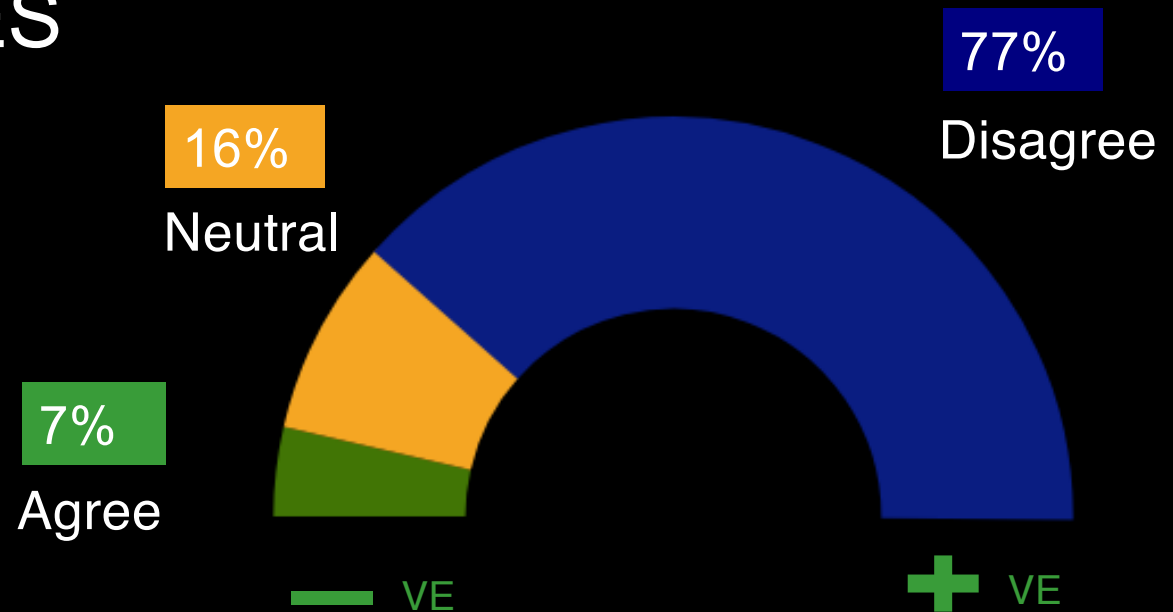
PEOPLE
SHOULD NOT
EXPECT TOO
MUCH FROM
THOSE WITH A
DISABILITY



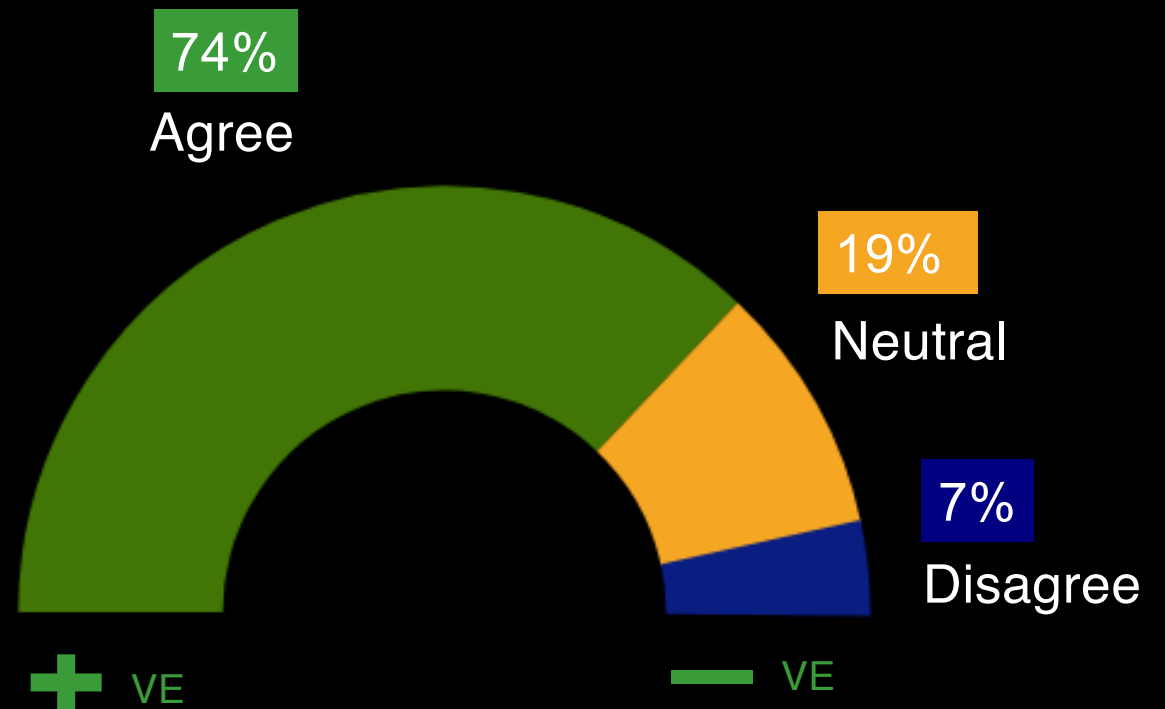
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY
SHOULD
NOT
RAISE
CHILDREN



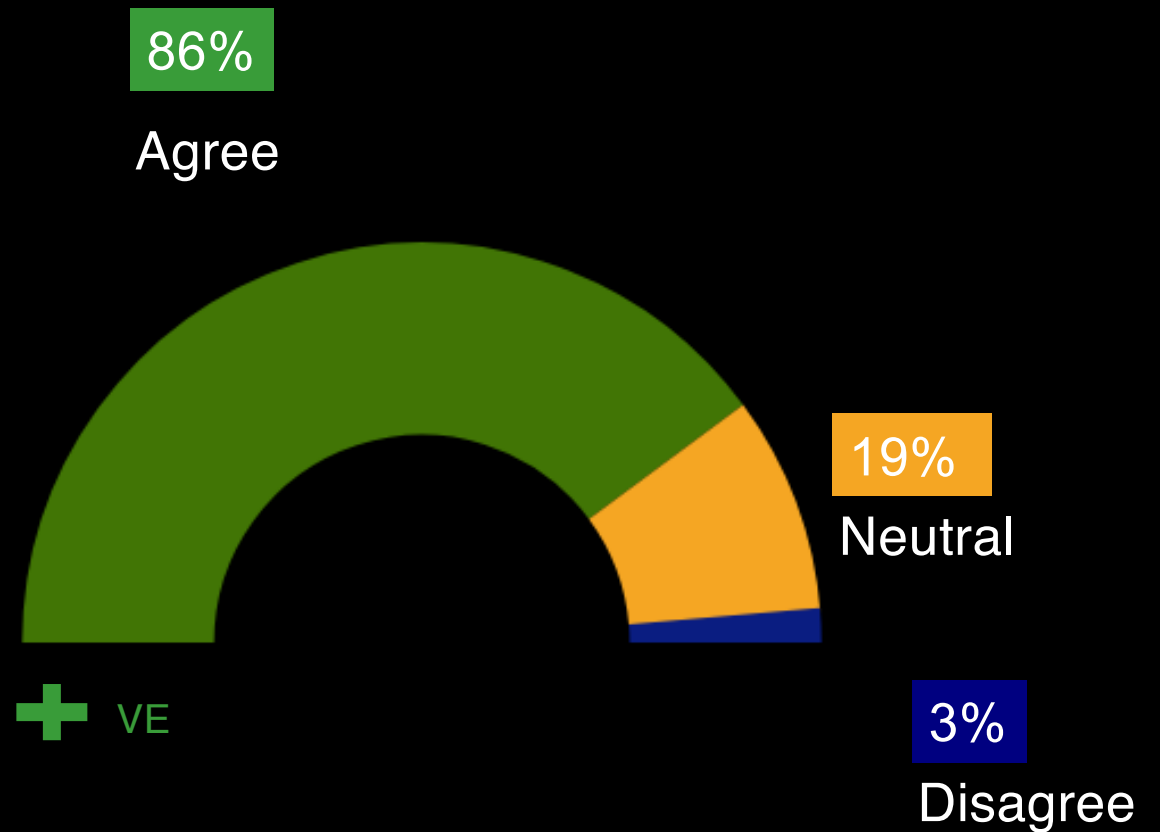
SEX SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS



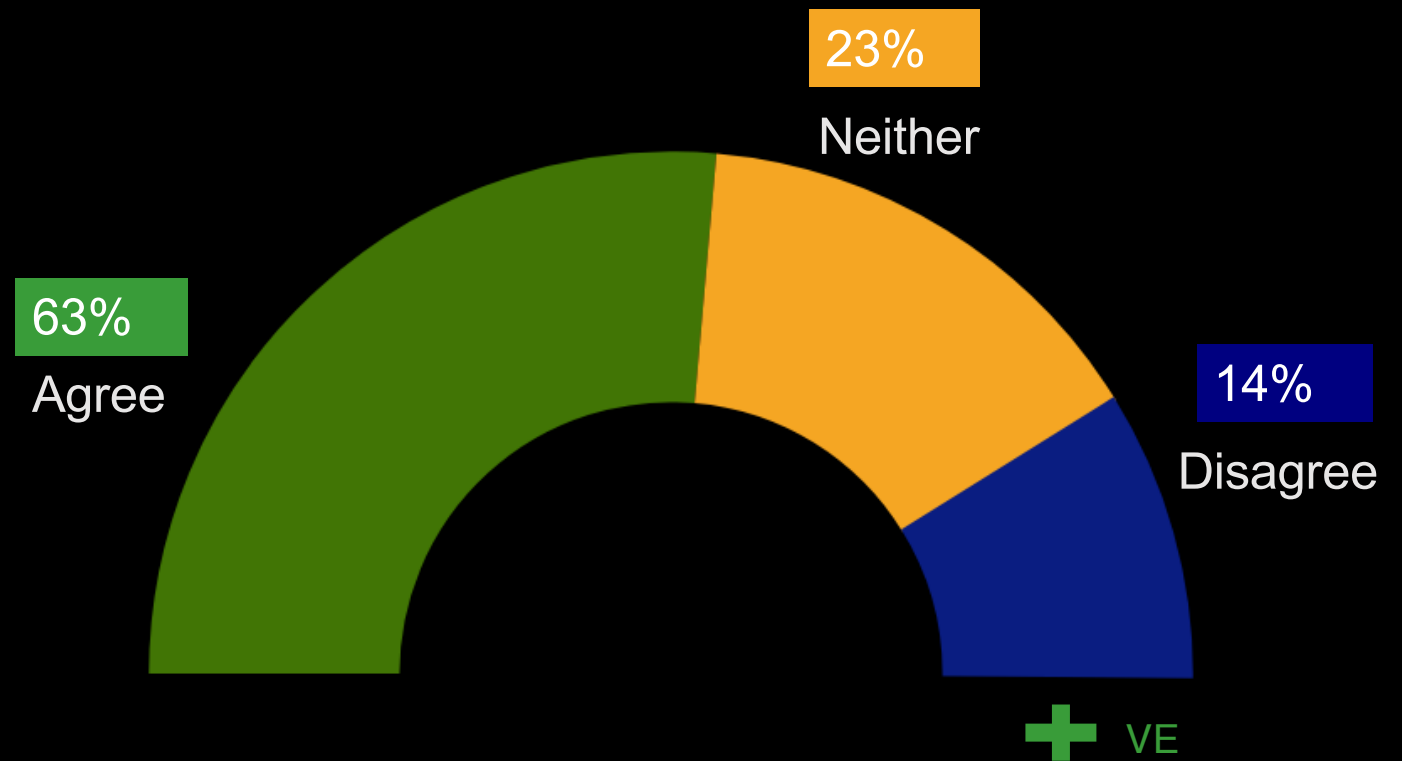
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY
SHOULD HAVE
A SAY ABOUT
WHO THEY
LIVE WITH



54% AGREE THAT
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY HAVE
PROBLEMS GETTING
INVOLVED IN
SOCIETY



PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY ARE
EASIER TO TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF
OR EXPLOIT



55% OF
AUSTRALIANS THINK
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY FIND IT
HARDER TO MAKE
NEW FRIENDS



SOCIETAL ATTITUDES



3

PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIETY'S ATTITUDES

42%

AGREE THAT PEOPLE
IGNORE PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY

41%

AGREE THAT PEOPLE TEND TO
TREAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY
AS IF THEY HAVE
NO FEELINGS

63%

AGREE THAT PEOPLE TEND TO
BECOME **IMPATIENT** WITH
PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

55%

AGREE THAT PEOPLE
OFTEN **MAKE FUN OF**
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

% OF PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID PEOPLE ARE **LIKELY TO PITY:**



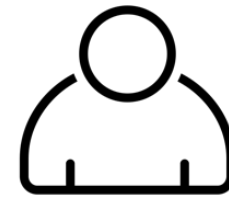
85%
BLIND
PEOPLE



80%
WHEELCHAIR
USERS



78%
INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITY



47%
LONG-TERM
DEPRESSION

% OF PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID PEOPLE ARE LIKELY TO **AVOID:**



33%

BLIND
PEOPLE



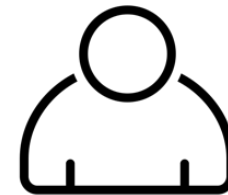
31%

WHEELCHAIR
USERS



61%

INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITY



53%

LONG-TERM
DEPRESSION



78% OF AUSTRALIANS
AGREE THAT PEOPLE
ARE UNSURE HOW
TO ACT
AROUND
PEOPLE WITH A
DISABILITY

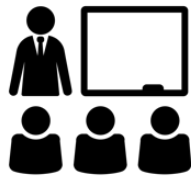
4

CONTACT WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

HAVE YOU EVER HAD CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WITH A DISABILITY?



50%
FAMILY



43%
CLASSMATE



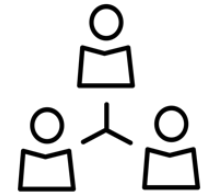
40%
COLLEAGUE



42%
FRIEND



11%
TEACHER



6%
BOSS

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SUMMARY

1. Self-reported attitudes were more inclusive than societal.
2. Respondents understood that attitudes to people with disability can be exclusionary.
3. Neutral responses were common.
4. Many saw people with disability as vulnerable.
5. About half of respondents said schools were accepting of people with disability; 2 in 5 thought workplaces were accepting.
6. Perceptions of how likely people were to pity/avoid varied by disability type.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

KEY AREAS FOR CHANGE

- Focus on those who are “sitting on the fence”.
- Provide resources to help people who are unsure how to act.
- Counter the pity narrative.
- Concentrate on particularly stigmatised groups who are avoided and blamed.
- Counter exclusionary school and workplace attitudes with positive messaging.
- More contact in workplaces, schools and community is likely to improve attitudes.

PANEL DISCUSSION

BENEFITS OF INVOLVING
RESEARCHERS WITH LIVED
EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITY

BEING INVOLVED IN THE
PROJECT

