

2023

Australian Media Landscape Report

Journalist Edition



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Acknowledgement of country:

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which this report was written. We recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities and pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

About the survey

Welcome to the findings report for Medianet's 2022 Australian Media Landscape survey. This survey was conducted between October and November 2022 to provide insights into the work and preferences of Australian journalists and help respond to some of the challenges they are facing in the industry.

Respondents were invited to participate via professional email addresses stored in Medianet's contacts database. A total of 1,023 journalists participated in the anonymous survey, providing a comprehensive result which helps us understand more about the challenges journalists are facing both personally and in their work, impacts of the current climate on media content, preferences and decisions of journalists, and trends or changes to the media landscape over the past few years.

This survey was conducted before the intense interest in AI tools such as ChatGPT. We appreciate that some challenges might arise for journalists and PR professionals in the coming months and this will be covered in the next 2023 surveys to be conducted towards the end of the year.

Survey participants were invited to enter a draw to win a monetary gift card. Responses were analysed confidentially with all identifying information about respondents removed to maintain anonymity.

Of the 1,023 respondents, 64% of respondents worked in digital journalism, 44% worked in print, 21% worked in radio, 13% worked in TV and 10% worked in podcasting.

The information presented in this report includes quantitative results, insights and quotes from respondents.

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Please note: this survey is intended to provide a snapshot of the experiences of journalists, not a comprehensive study into the state of the media industry. Responses received may not fully reflect an accurate sample of Australian journalists.

Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number. Where these do not add up to 100, this is due to respondents being able to select more than one answer to the question.

Respondents overall

1,023

 **64%**
Digital journalism

 **44%**
Print

 **21%**
Radio

 **13%**
TV

 **10%**
Podcasting

Snapshot of the media industry



FIGURE 1: Age of respondents (years)

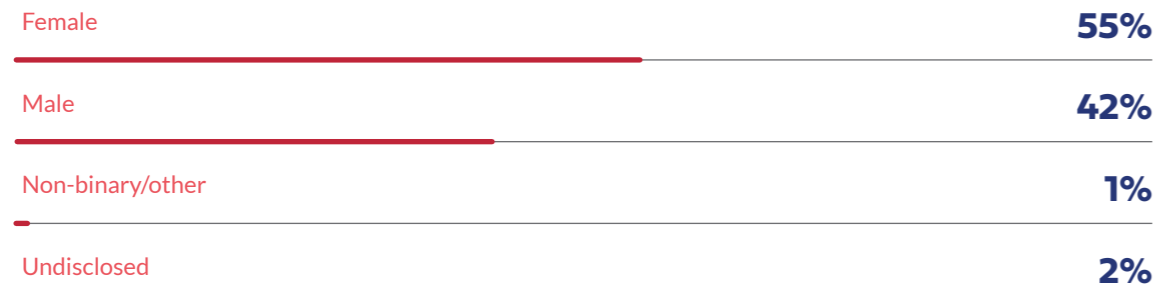


FIGURE 2: Gender of respondents

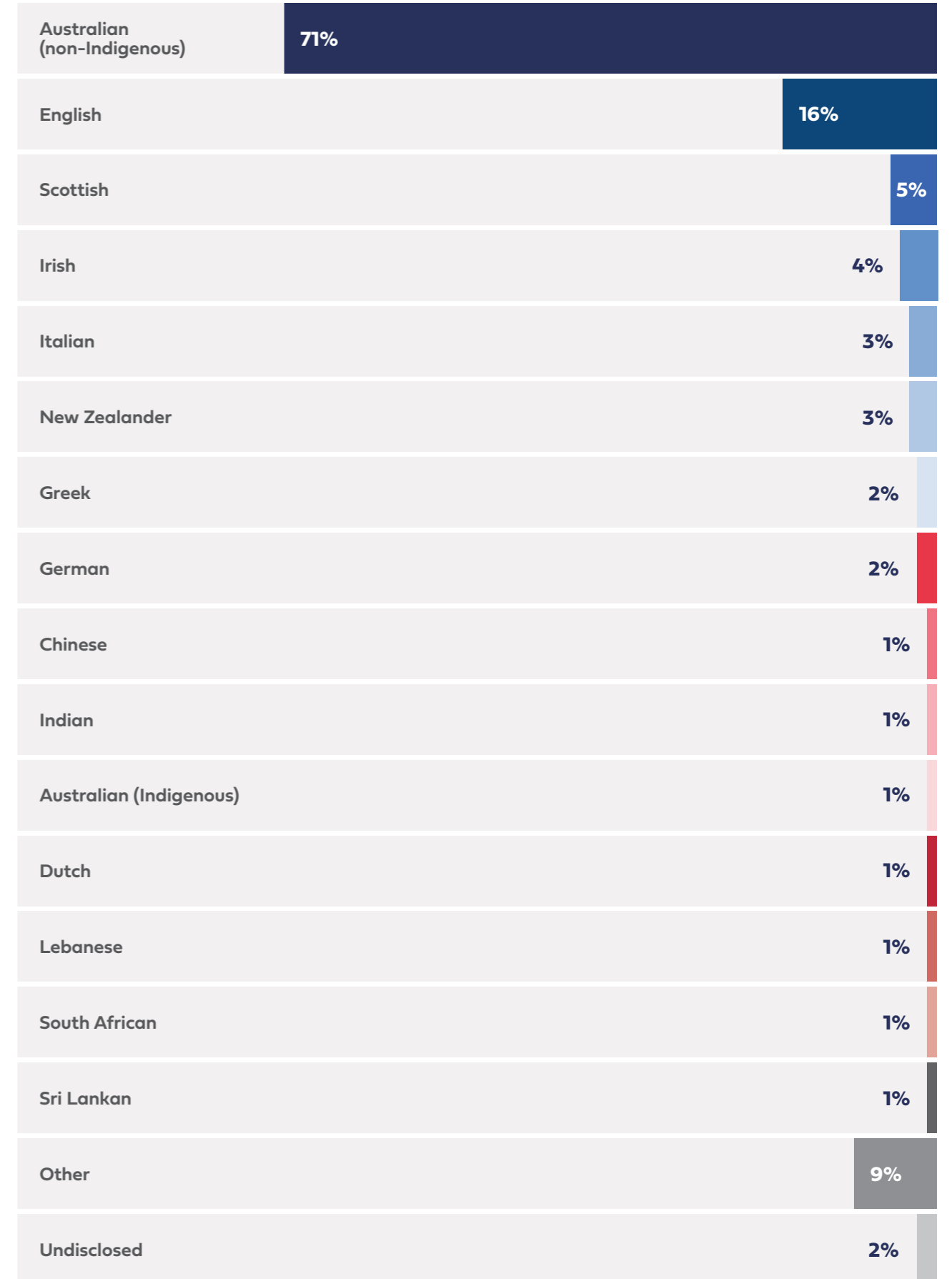
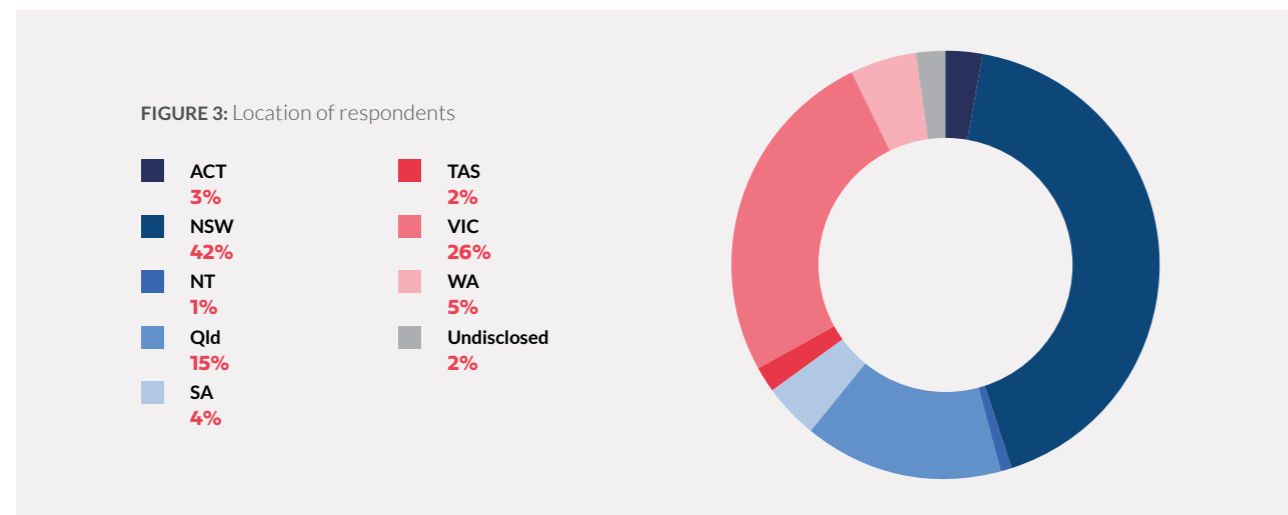
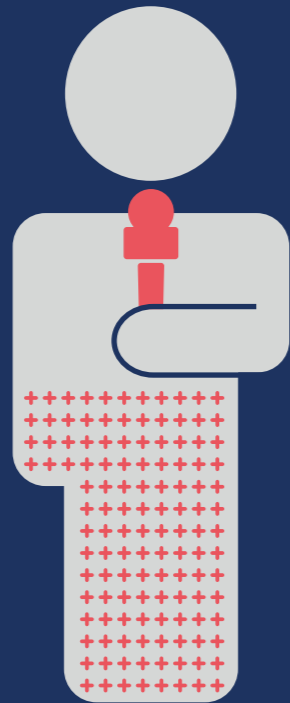


FIGURE 4: Ethnic background of respondents

Snapshot of key findings

45%

of journalists said their job or role has changed in some way this year



Respondent's pay (of those who disclosed) increased in 2022, with a 6% increase in journalists disclosing an income of over \$60,000 p.a. The most common pay bracket for journalists was between \$60,000 and \$79,999 p.a., closely followed by \$80,000 to \$99,999 p.a..



Two thirds (64%) of journalists in 2022 did at least some of their work from home, with 40% of journalists having adopted working from home since the pandemic began.



The percentage of respondents working in print media has been decreasing over the past three years, dropping by 8% between 2020 and 2022.



The percentage of respondents who reported money to be one of their greatest challenges of the year doubled in 2022 (36% in 2022 compared to 18% in 2021).

CHANGES



98%

of survey respondents felt that public interest journalism had been threatened in 2022. The top factors identified as threats were an increase in disinformation/'fake news', lack of resources and staff and the closure of media companies/newsrooms.



46%

of journalists said they had experienced abuse or harassment because of their profession and work in the media.



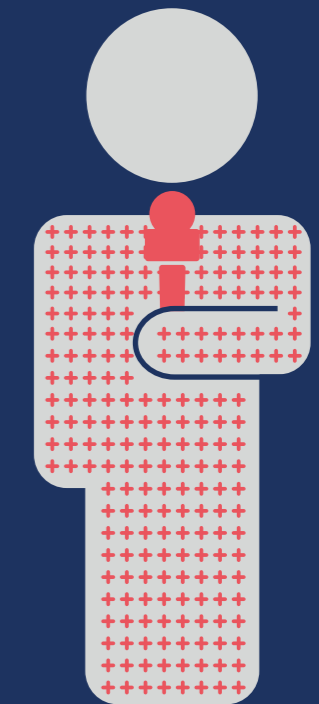
22%

of respondents who reported being of an ethnic background other than Australian non-Indigenous, New Zealander, English, Scottish or Irish said they had experienced racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse as part of their media work (12% of respondents overall).

CHALLENGES

72%

of journalists said they had experienced burnout in their media work.



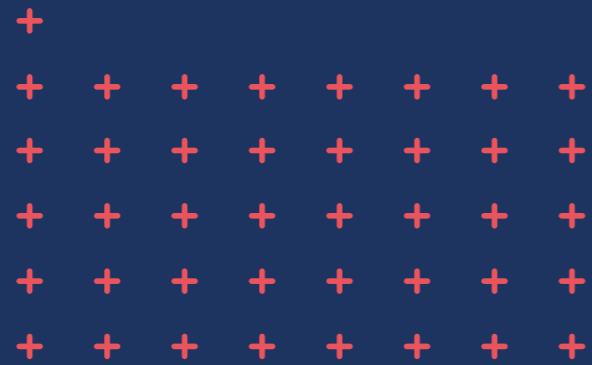


84%

of journalists were found to do at least an hour or two of unpaid work each week.

41%

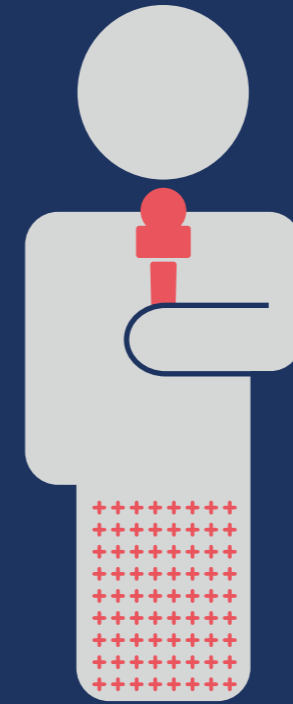
of journalists responded that they believed, in relation to their work, that defamation laws in Australia are too strict.



Money, changes in workload, uncertainty about the future and mental health were the most common challenges for journalists in 2022.

49%

Half of journalists (49%) said they had withheld from publishing information that they knew to be true because of fear of defamation.



31%

Almost a third of all male respondents (31%) who disclosed their pay said they earn more than \$100,000 p.a., compared to 20% of females and 13% of non-binary journalists. This was a slight decrease in the gender pay gap compared to 2021 findings, when 16% of women were earning over \$100,000 p.a..



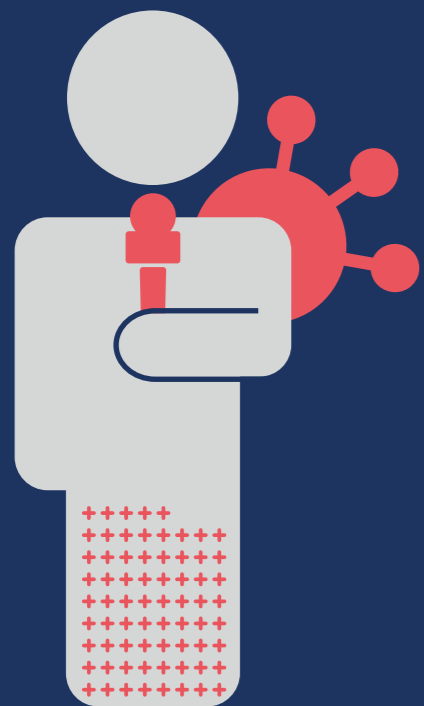
Female and non-binary journalists experienced higher rates of abuse or harassment because of their media work. Sixty-two percent of non-binary journalists had experienced abuse or harassment, 47% of female journalists and 40% of male journalists.



Female and non-binary respondents reported significantly higher burnout rates, with 92% of non-binary respondents and 78% of women having experienced burnout in their media careers compared to 65% of men.



Male journalists were far more highly represented in chief-of-staff, photojournalist or cameraperson, publisher and presenter or announcer positions compared to female or non-binary journalists.



28%

said they had been asked to take a certain editorial stance based on the affiliations or beliefs of the media organisation where they currently work or freelance for.



Non-binary journalists reported being significantly more challenged by mental health in 2022 than female and male journalists.



Female and non-binary journalists reported being more challenged overall in 2022 compared to male journalists.

CHALLENGES

THE GENDER DIVIDE



01.

Work and employment of journalists

m.

Current work and employment

Of all survey respondents, 64% worked in digital media, 44% in print, 21% in radio, 13% in TV and 10% in podcasting. As found in last year's study, a large proportion of journalists worked across more than one platform of media (39%).

The percentage of respondents working in **print** media has been decreasing over the past three years, dropping by 8% between 2020 and 2022 (see Figure 6).

More than half of survey respondents (56%) worked in traditional journalist or reporter roles. Male journalists were more highly represented in chief-of-staff, photojournalist or cameraperson, publisher and presenter or announcer positions compared to female or non binary journalists. They were also slightly more represented in editor and producer positions (see Figure 8).

The majority of respondents (69%) were employed full-time in 2022. The next most common employment types were freelance (19%) and part-time (11%).

Almost half (46%) worked at independent media organisations, with 40% at commercial and 13% at public/government funded media. Of the 4% who responded 'other', half noted they worked in community media.

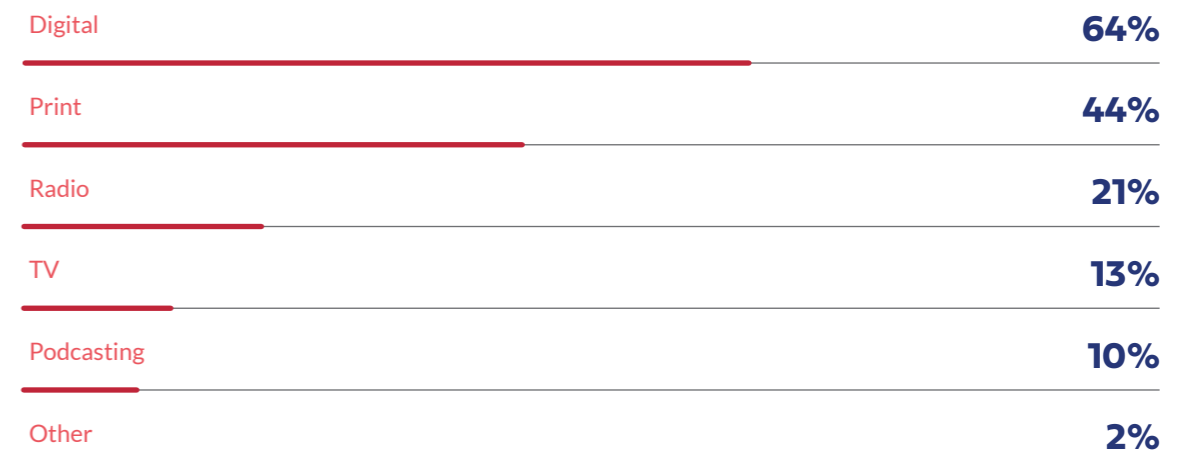


FIGURE 5: Sector of the media industry

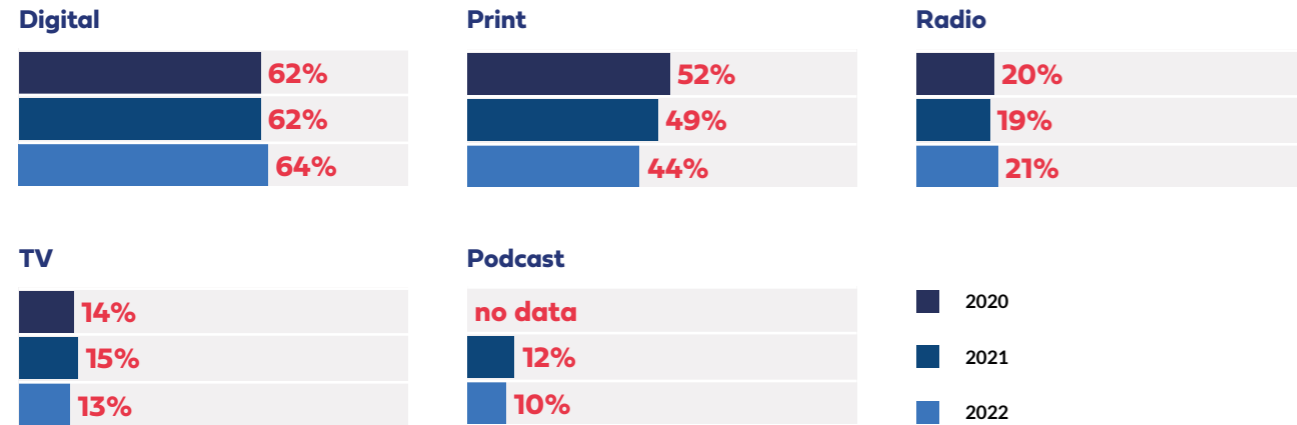


FIGURE 6: Sector of the media industry over time

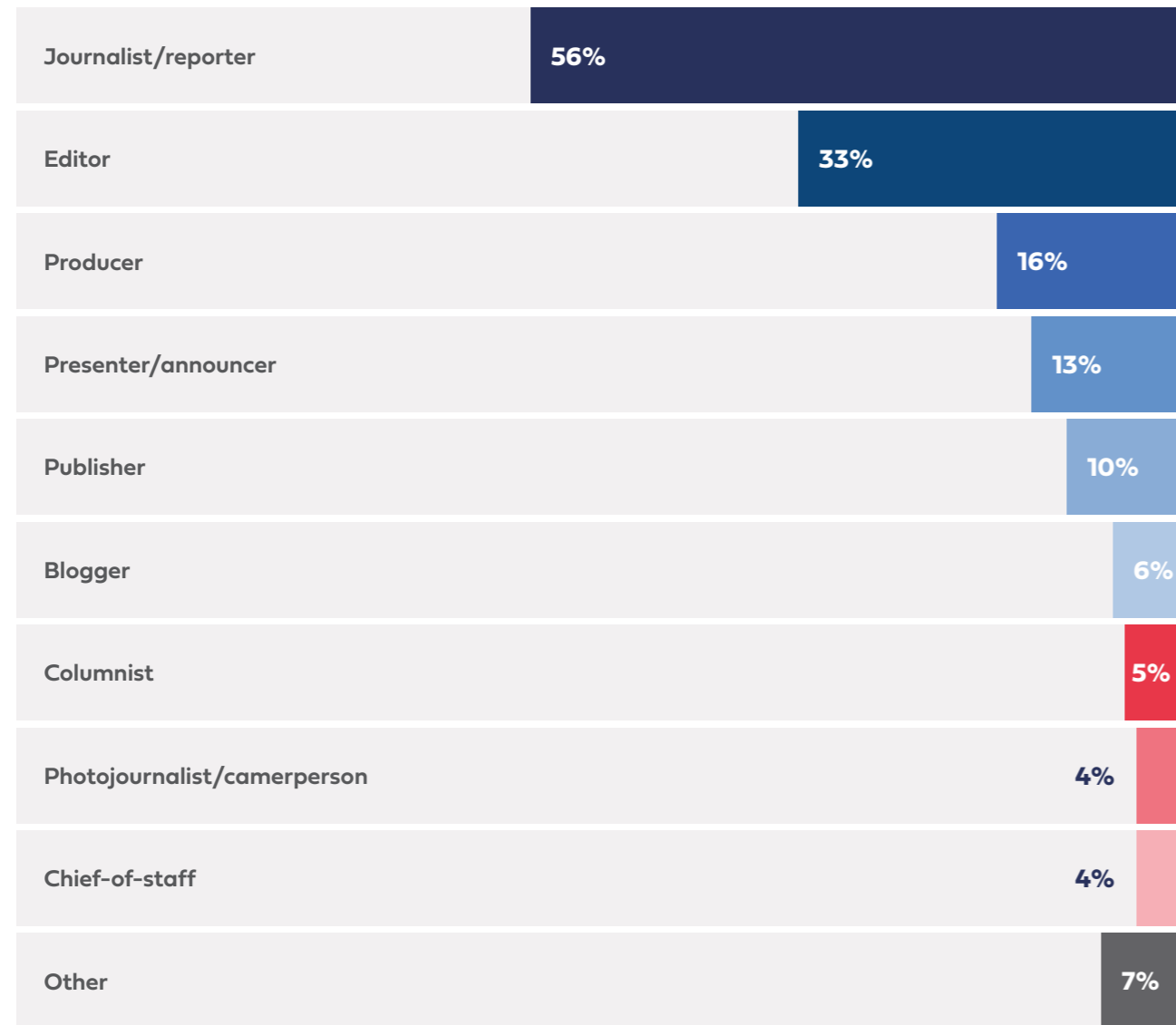
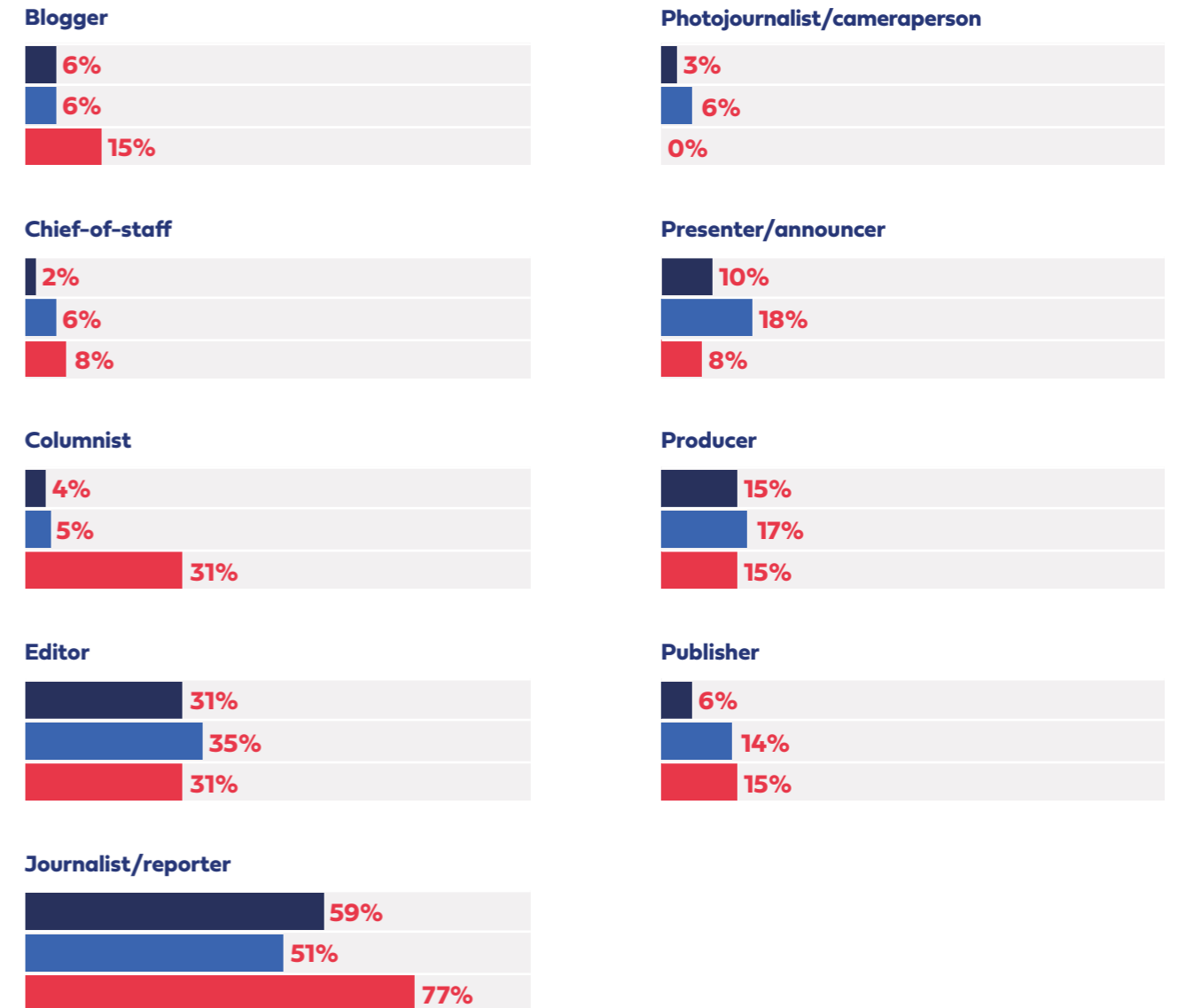


FIGURE 7: Role in the media



■ Female
■ Male
■ Non-binary

FIGURE 8: Role in the media (gender)
 Please note: Data from respondents who identified their gender as non-binary may not accurately reflect this demographic due to a small sample size.

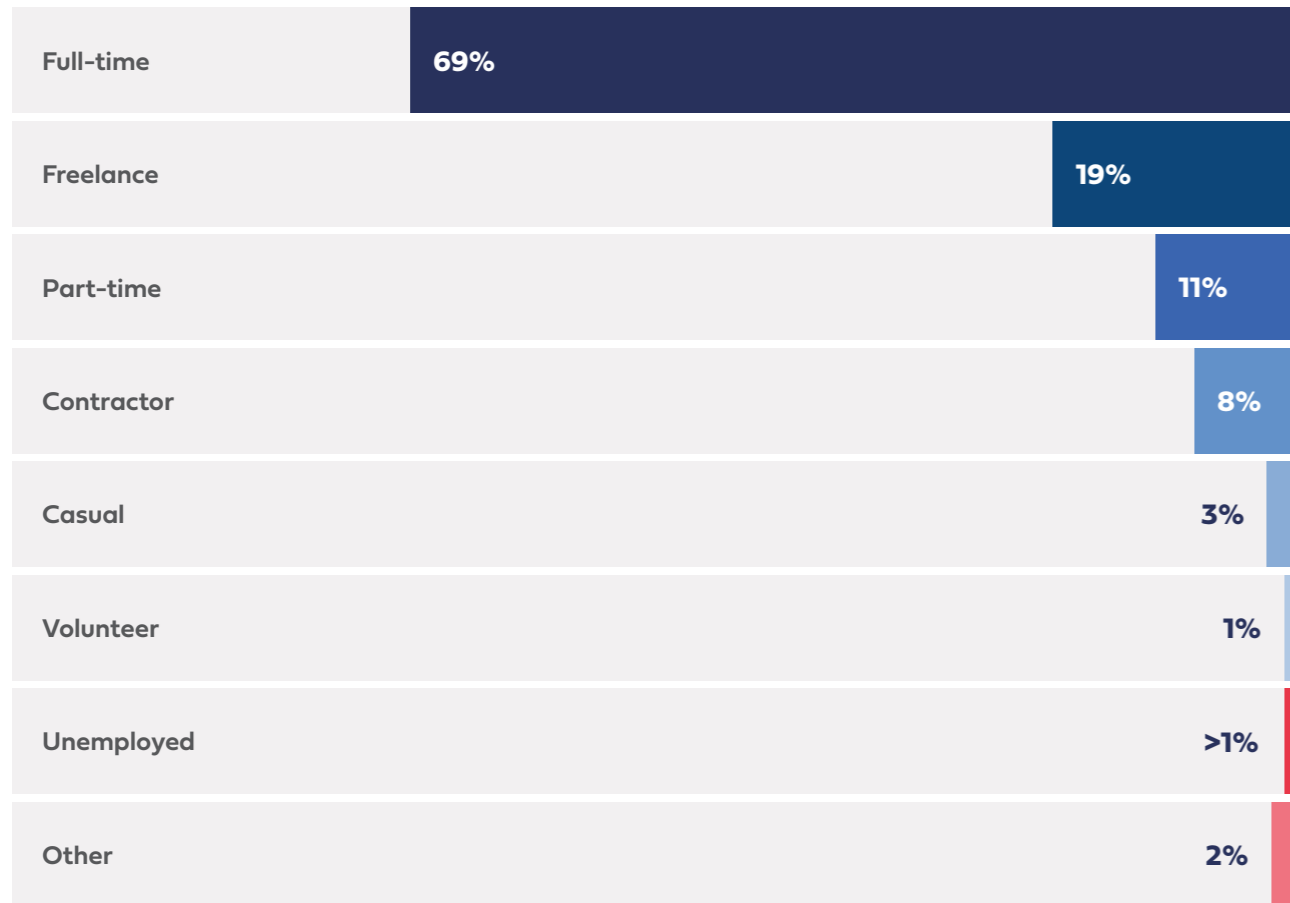


FIGURE 9: Employment status

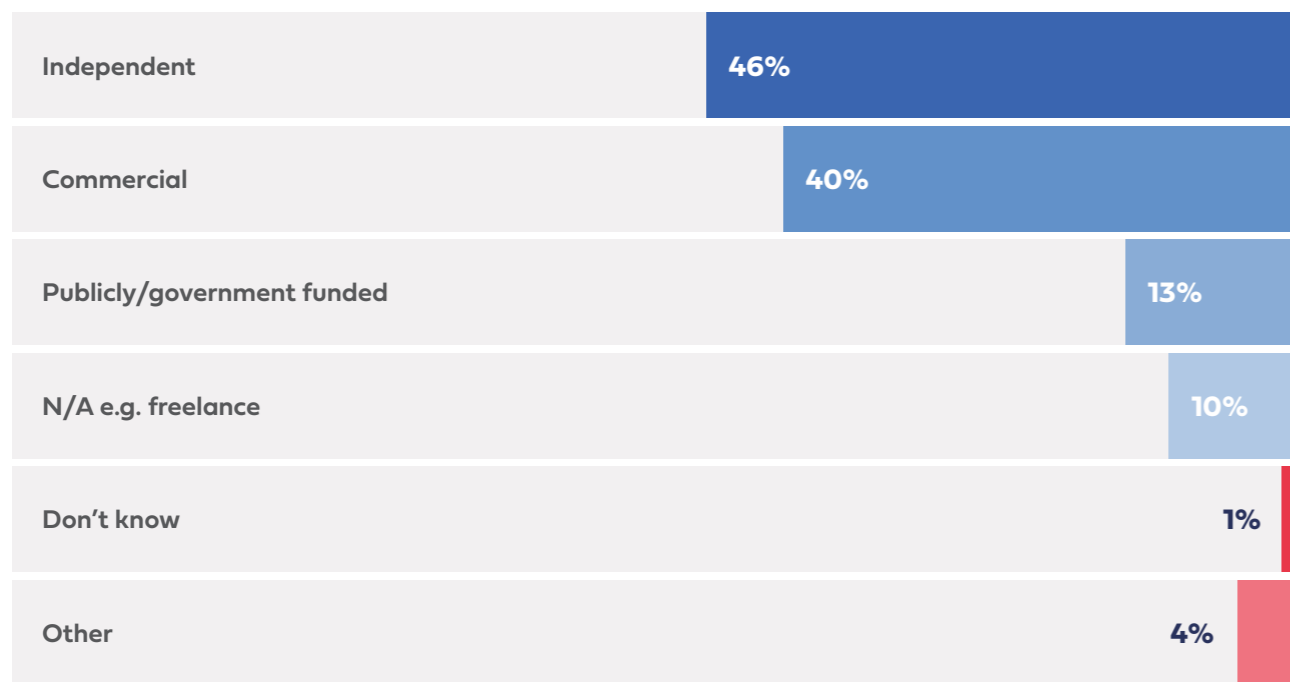


FIGURE 10: Type of media organisation

Industry movement

Of all survey respondents, 45% said their job or role has changed in some way this year, including changing jobs in the industry, changing roles at the same organisation, or starting a 'side hustle'/looking for additional work in the industry. Seven percent said they had started looking for a job outside of journalism.

Of the respondents who cited 'other' changes (5%), several mentioned an increased workload or a job change after being made redundant.



45% of all survey respondents said their job or role has changed in some way this year



FIGURE 11: Job changes in 2022

Work location

64%

of surveyed journalists were working at least part of the time at home in 2022



Two thirds (64%) of surveyed journalists were working at least part of the time at home in 2022, with 40% of journalists having adopted working from home since the pandemic began.

Thirty-two percent of journalists worked entirely from home, and 32% were doing a mix of both working at home and the office, studio or newsroom (having always done this or started this practice since the pandemic).

There was a significant difference in work locations between full-time employed and freelance journalists. Two thirds of freelancers (64%) worked entirely from home, compared to 21% of full-time employees. There has been a significant increase in full-time employees working in a hybrid combination of both home and the office/studio/newsroom since the pandemic began, from 8% pre-pandemic to 38% in 2022.

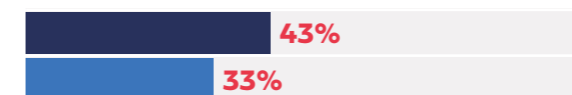
Fewer journalists were working entirely from home compared to [Medianet's survey in November 2020](#) (43% compared to 32% in 2022).

Two thirds of survey respondents (66%) worked in the city, with 29% working regionally, 13% in the suburbs and 1% internationally.



Less journalists were working entirely from home compared to Medianet's survey in November 2020

Home



Hybrid



Office/studio



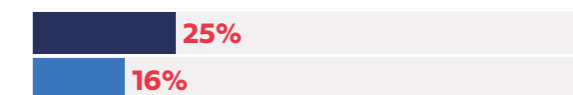
Other



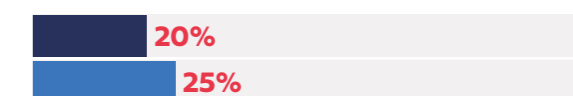
■ 2020
■ 2022

FIGURE 12: Work locations of journalists 2022 vs 2020

Worked from home since the pandemic began



Worked from home and the office/studio since the pandemic began



Worked from home since before the pandemic



Worked from the office/studio throughout the pandemic



Worked from home and the office since before the pandemic



Returned to working in the office after working from home during the pandemic



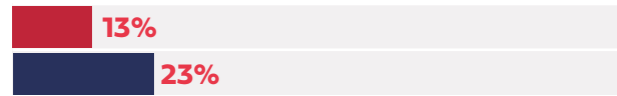
Other



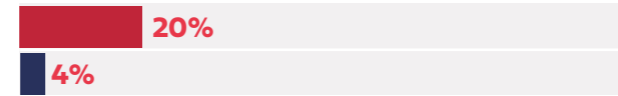
■ 2020
■ 2022

FIGURE 13: Work location 2022 vs 2020

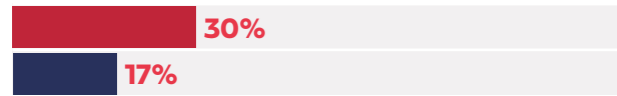
Worked from home since the pandemic began



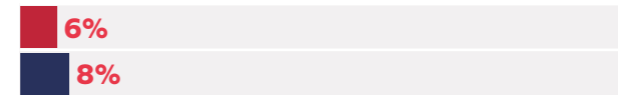
Worked from the office/studio since before the pandemic



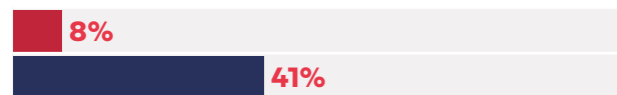
Worked from home and the office/studio since the pandemic began



Worked from home and the office since before the pandemic



Worked from home since before the pandemic



Returned to working in the office after working from home during the pandemic



- Full-time
- Freelance

FIGURE 14: Work locations of respondents (journalist employment type)

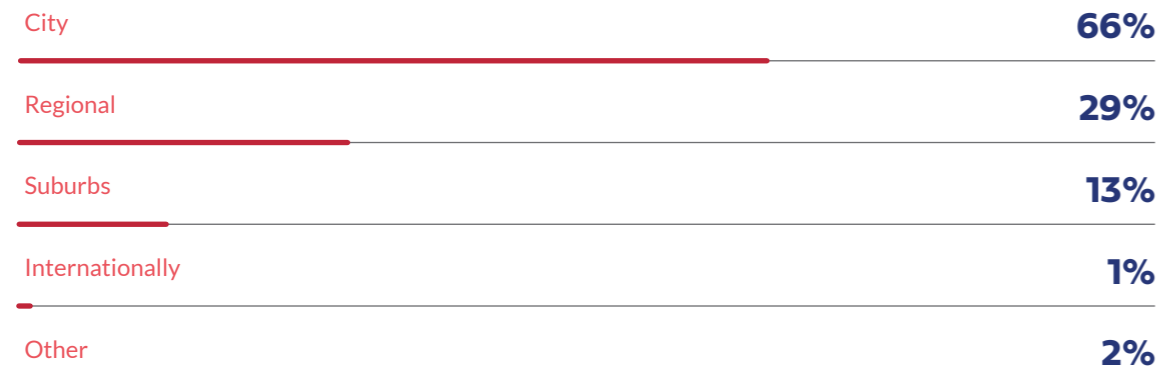


FIGURE 15: Location of respondents 2

Pay

The most common pay bracket for journalists was between \$60,000 and \$79,999 per year, closely followed by \$80,000 to \$99,999 per year. Responses indicated that journalists' pay increased in 2022, with a 6% increase in journalists earning over \$60,000 per year, compared to Medianet's 2021 survey. Many respondents, however, noted that they still felt underpaid for their work, and that pay rates have not increased at the same rate as the cost of living.

There remains a significant gender pay gap in the industry, with women far less represented in the higher pay brackets. This gap aligns with the lower representation of women in higher management/editorial roles, as seen in Figure 8. Almost a third of all male respondents (31%) who disclosed their pay said they earned more than \$100,000 per year, compared to 20% of females and 13% of non-binary journalists.

However, the pay gap for women had decreased somewhat compared to 2021 survey findings, with women moving into higher pay brackets at a slightly higher rate than men (see Figure 19).

Journalists from publicly/government funded and commercial media organisations appeared to earn more, in general, than those working at independent media, where a third (34%) of respondents were earning less than \$60,000 per year.

TV journalists reported the highest annual salaries, with 37% earning over \$100,000 per year (see Figure 21). Journalists working in radio and print were the least represented in this higher pay bracket (20% and 22% respectively). These findings do not account for respondents' employment types, for example part-time compared to full-time.

I work multiple jobs in the media to make a living.

My workload has increased but I haven't had a pay rise in 5 years.

The base wage is low compared to the average Aussie wage. I do worry I will never be able to afford a house on my own.

Journalism is my side hustle, not my main job – I would not be able to make a living from it.

The pay rates for freelancers can be so low, my babysitter sometimes earns more.

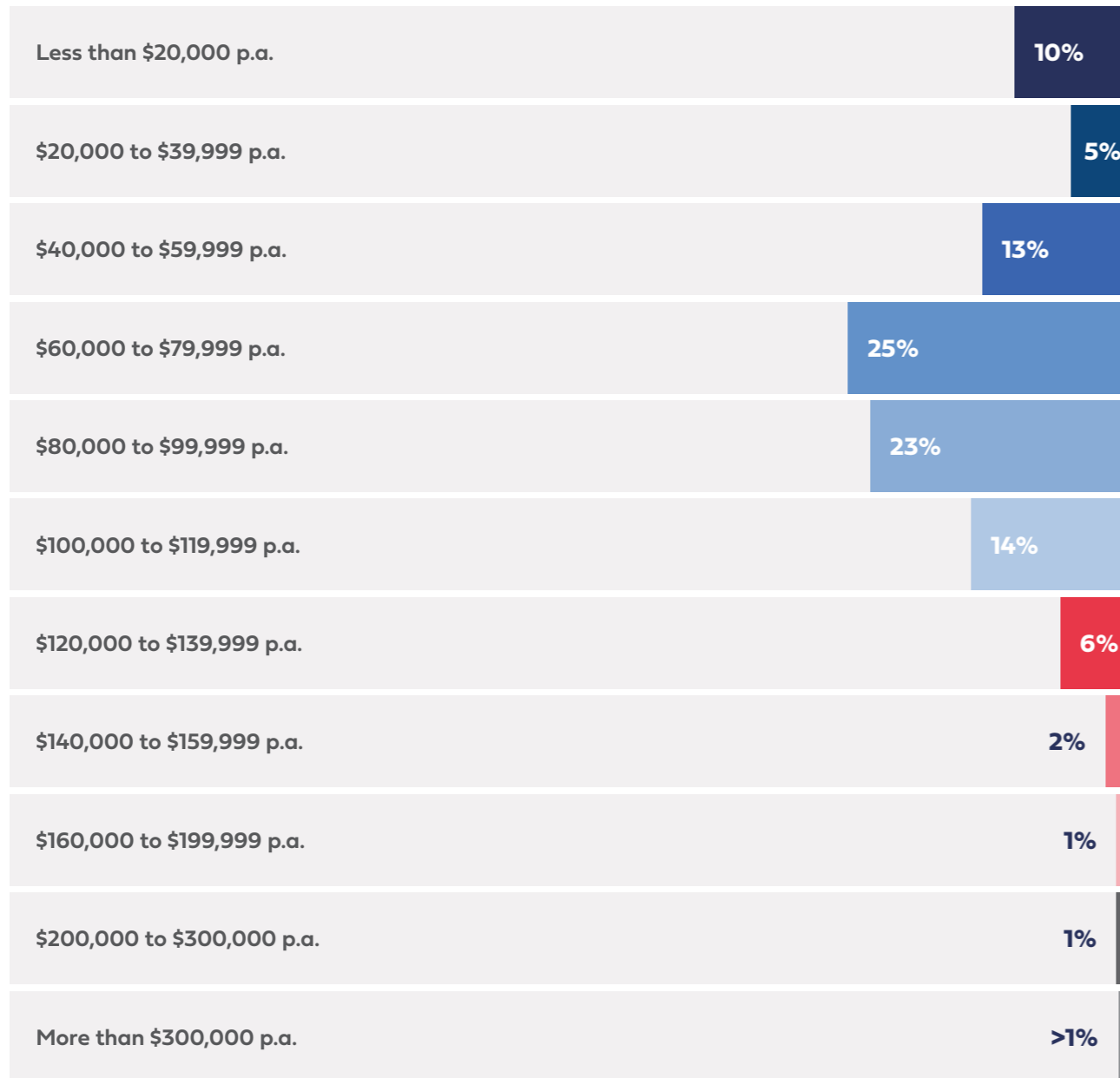


FIGURE 16: Journalist pay (those who disclosed)

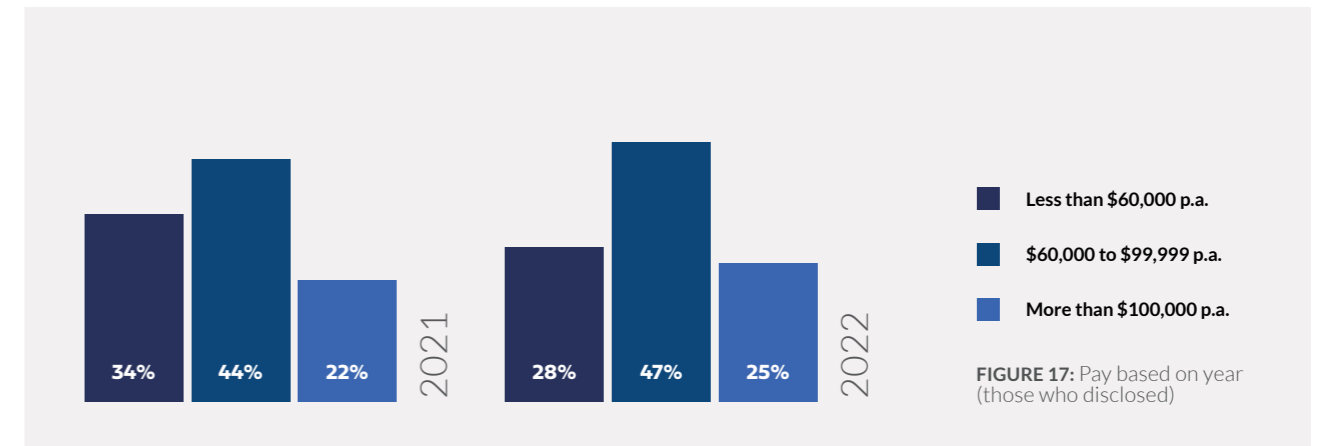


FIGURE 17: Pay based on year (those who disclosed)

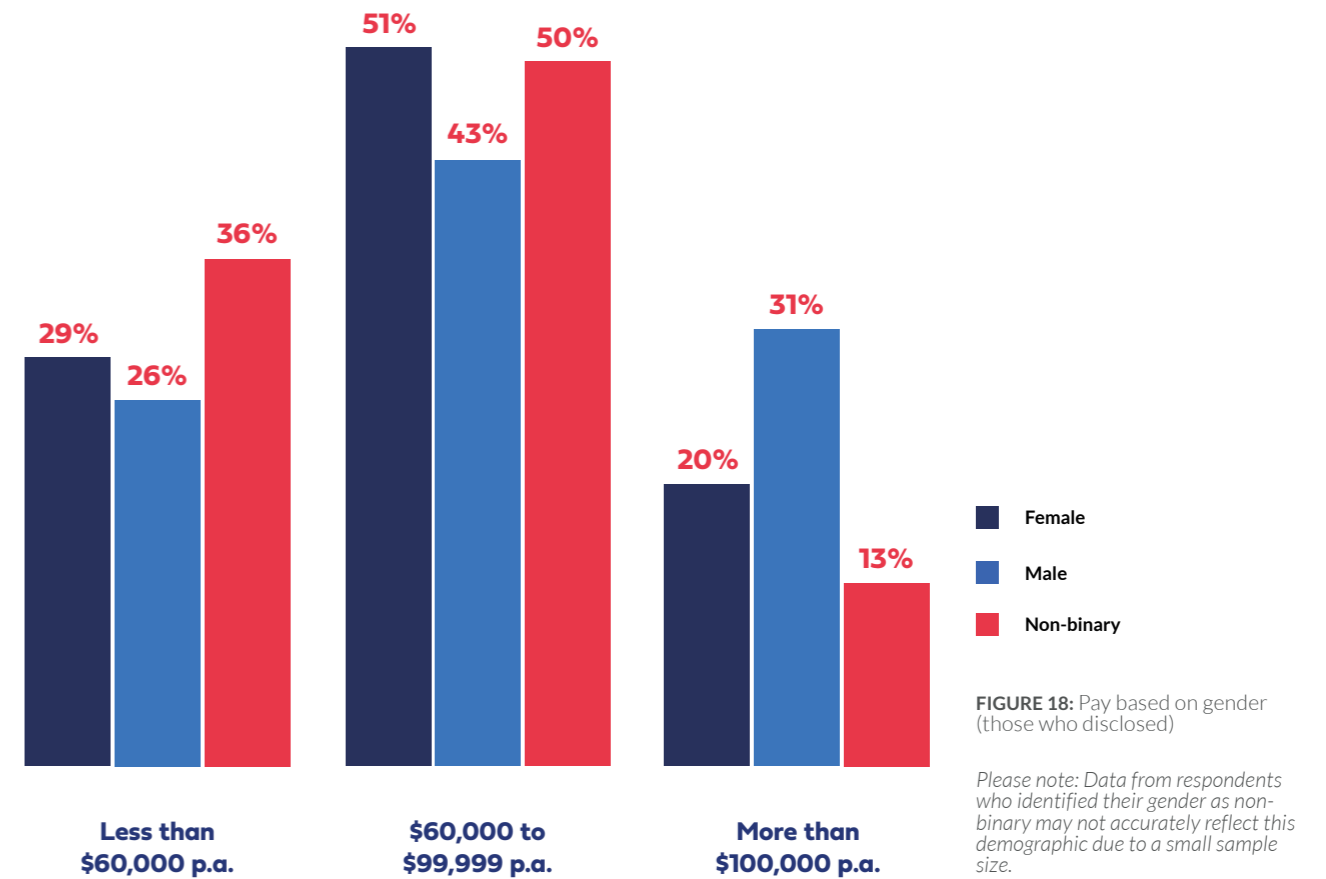
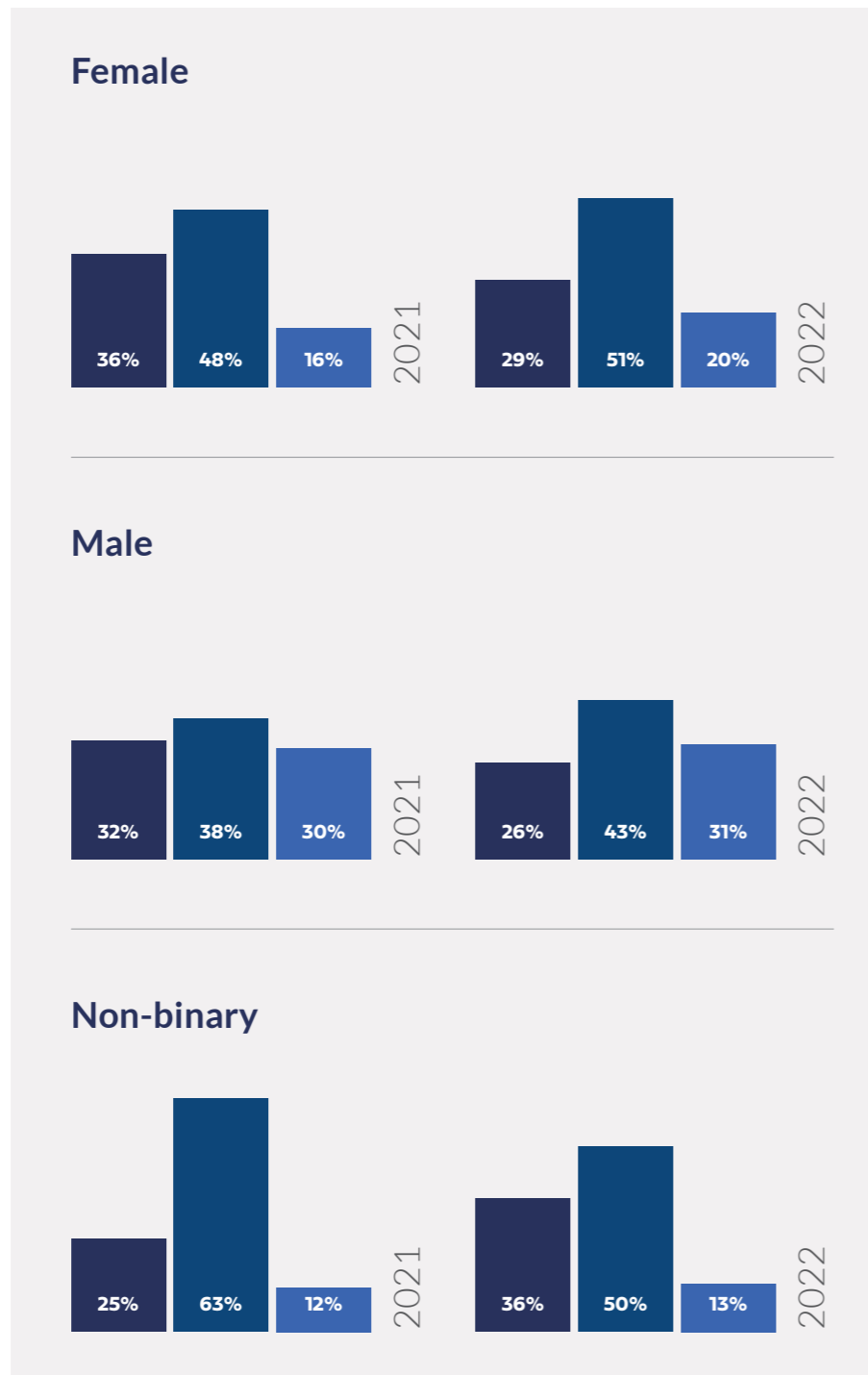


FIGURE 18: Pay based on gender (those who disclosed)

Please note: Data from respondents who identified their gender as non-binary may not accurately reflect this demographic due to a small sample size.



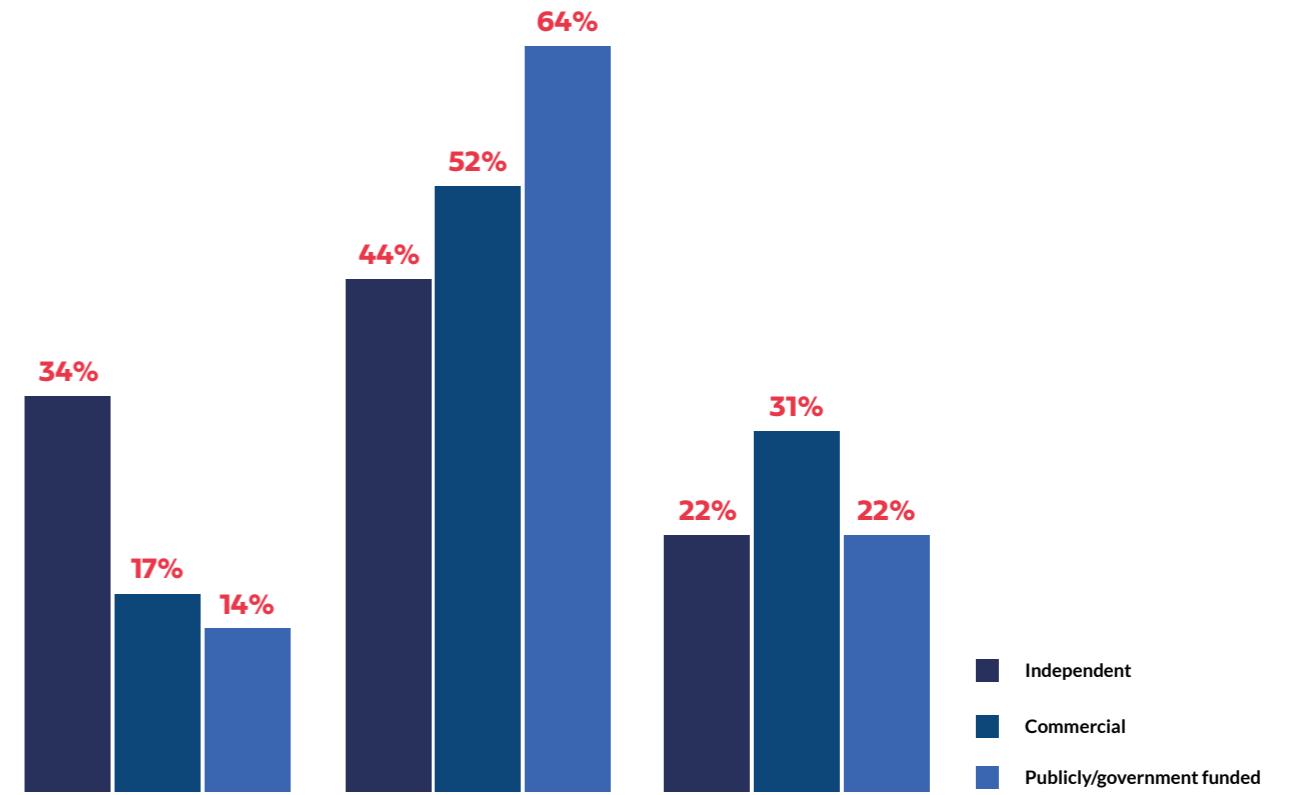
The gender pay gap decreased slightly for journalists in 2022.



- Less than \$60,000 p.a.
- \$60,000 to \$99,999 p.a.
- More than \$100,000 p.a.

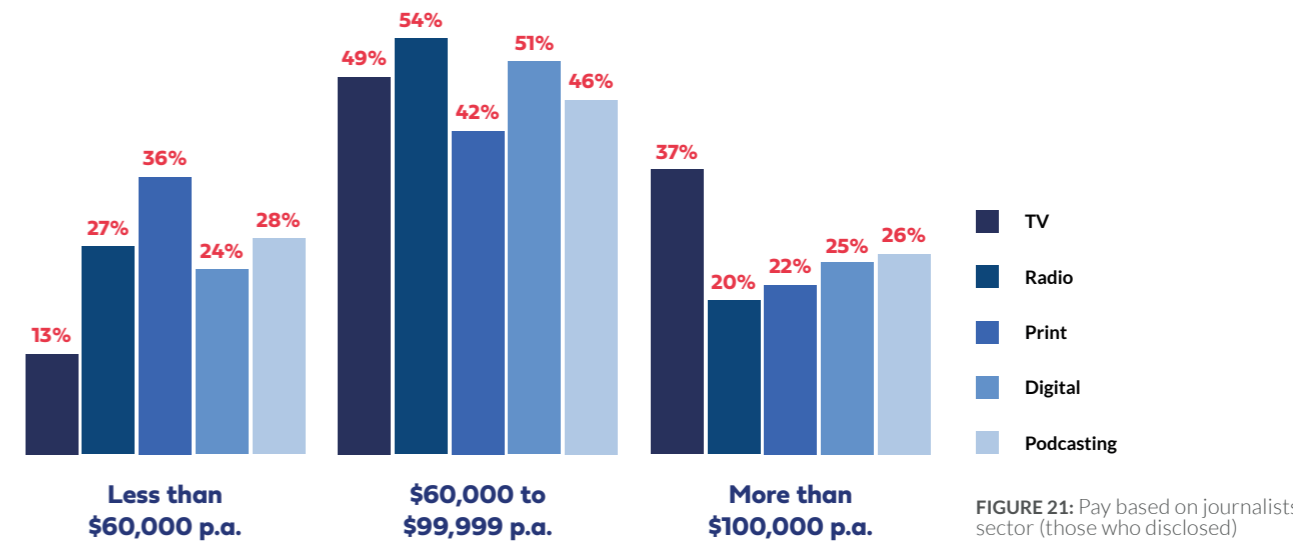
FIGURE 19: Pay based on gender, by year (those who disclosed)

Please note: Data from respondents who identified their gender as non-binary may not accurately reflect this demographic due to a small sample size.



- Independent
- Commercial
- Publicly/government funded

FIGURE 20: Pay based on journalists' media organisation type (those who disclosed)



- TV
- Radio
- Print
- Digital
- Podcasting

FIGURE 21: Pay based on journalists' sector (those who disclosed)

Unpaid work

84%

of journalists were found to do at least an hour or two of unpaid work each week.



Eighty-four percent of journalists were found to do at least an hour or two of unpaid work each week. This includes 30% who reported doing an hour or two unpaid work weekly, 30% who did an hour or two unpaid per day and 24% who did more than 10 hours a week unpaid. Women reported slightly higher rates of unpaid work (85% compared to 82% of men), however male journalists reported more hours of unpaid work (see Figure 23).

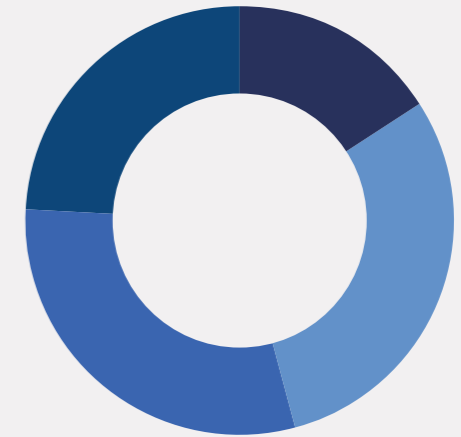
Similarly, despite younger journalists reporting higher rates of doing unpaid work overall, older journalists reported higher rates of completing 10 or more hours of unpaid work each week. This may be accounted for in part by retirees volunteering for media organisations, which was referenced by some respondents in the survey.

Journalists from different media organisation types reported similar rates of unpaid work, but the number of hours differed. Journalists working at publicly/government funded media organisations had the highest rates of working an hour or two unpaid per day (39%), while journalists from independent media organisations reported the highest rates of doing 10 or more hours of unpaid work each week (28%).

Chiefs-of-staff reported the highest rates of unpaid work, with 97% doing at least an hour or two a week, and almost half (47%) working 10 or more hours unpaid each week. Half of all publishers also reported doing 10 or more hours unpaid each week. Columnists reported the lowest rates of unpaid work at 82% (see Figure 26).

FIGURE 22: Unpaid work

- None 16%
- Hour or two a week 30%
- Hour or two a day 30%
- More than 10 hours a week 24%



Chiefs-of-staff reported the highest rates of unpaid work, with almost half reporting to work unpaid for 10 or more hours weekly.

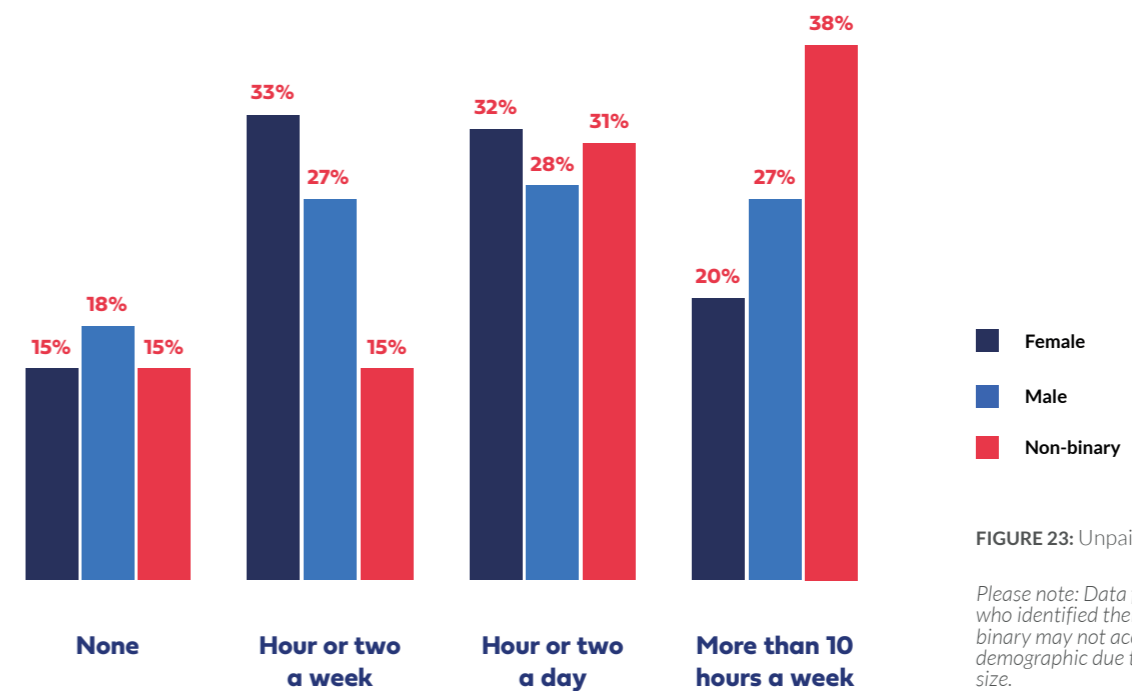


FIGURE 23: Unpaid work (gender)

Please note: Data from respondents who identified their gender as non-binary may not accurately reflect this demographic due to a small sample size.

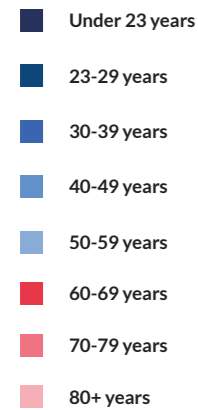
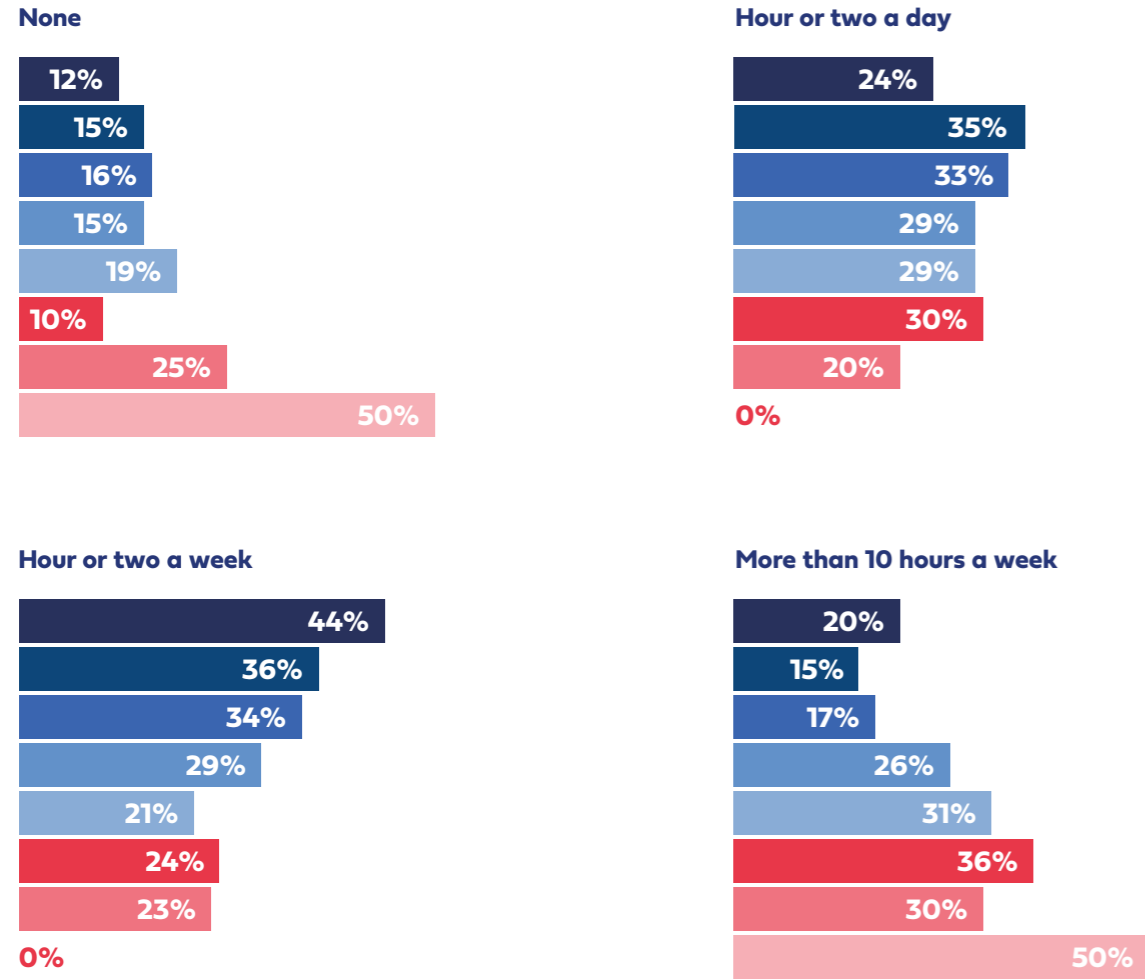


FIGURE 24: Unpaid work (age)

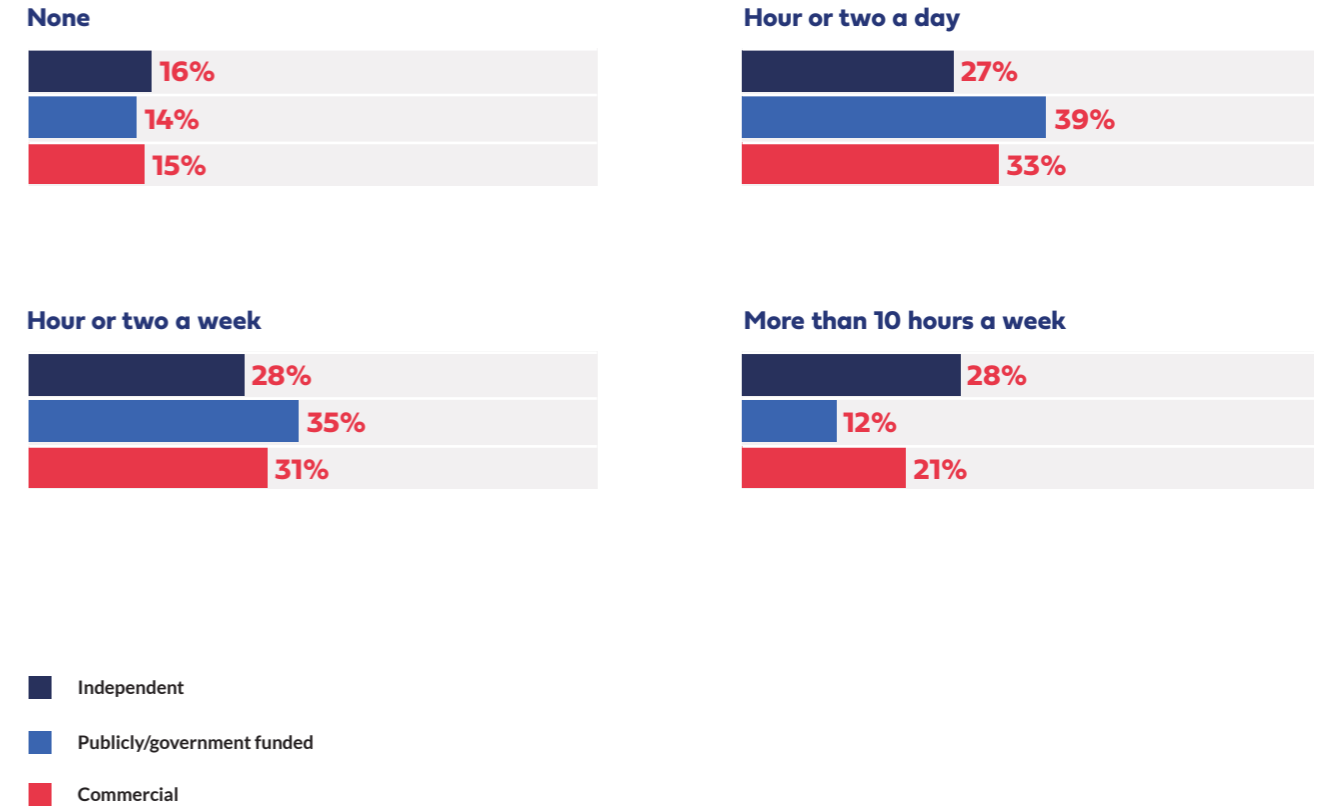


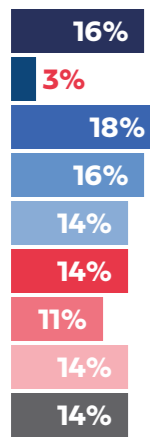
FIGURE 25: Unpaid work (media organisation type)

🗨️ We would not have a local newspaper if I had not offered my services voluntarily.

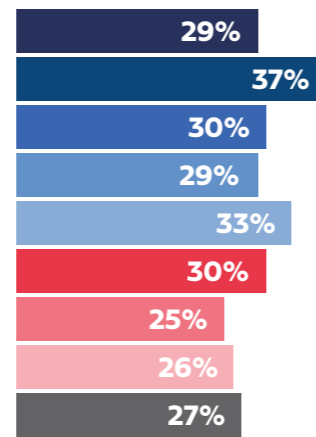
🗨️ I work 12 hour days and am informally on call out of hours and on weekends and days off.

🗨️ [I'm] retired and work in community radio as a hobby.

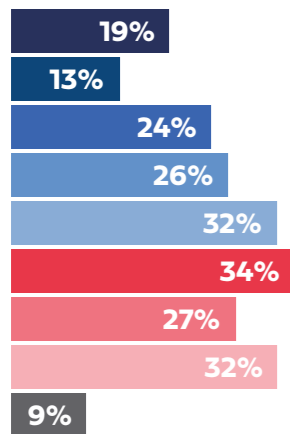
None



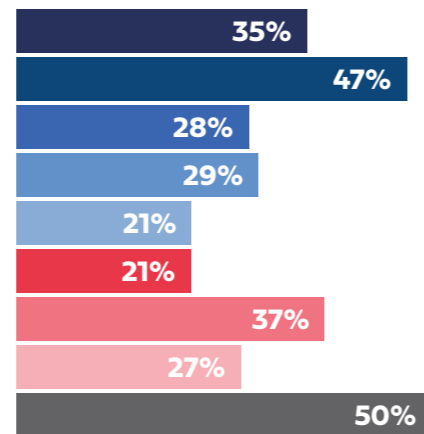
Hour or two a day



Hour or two a week



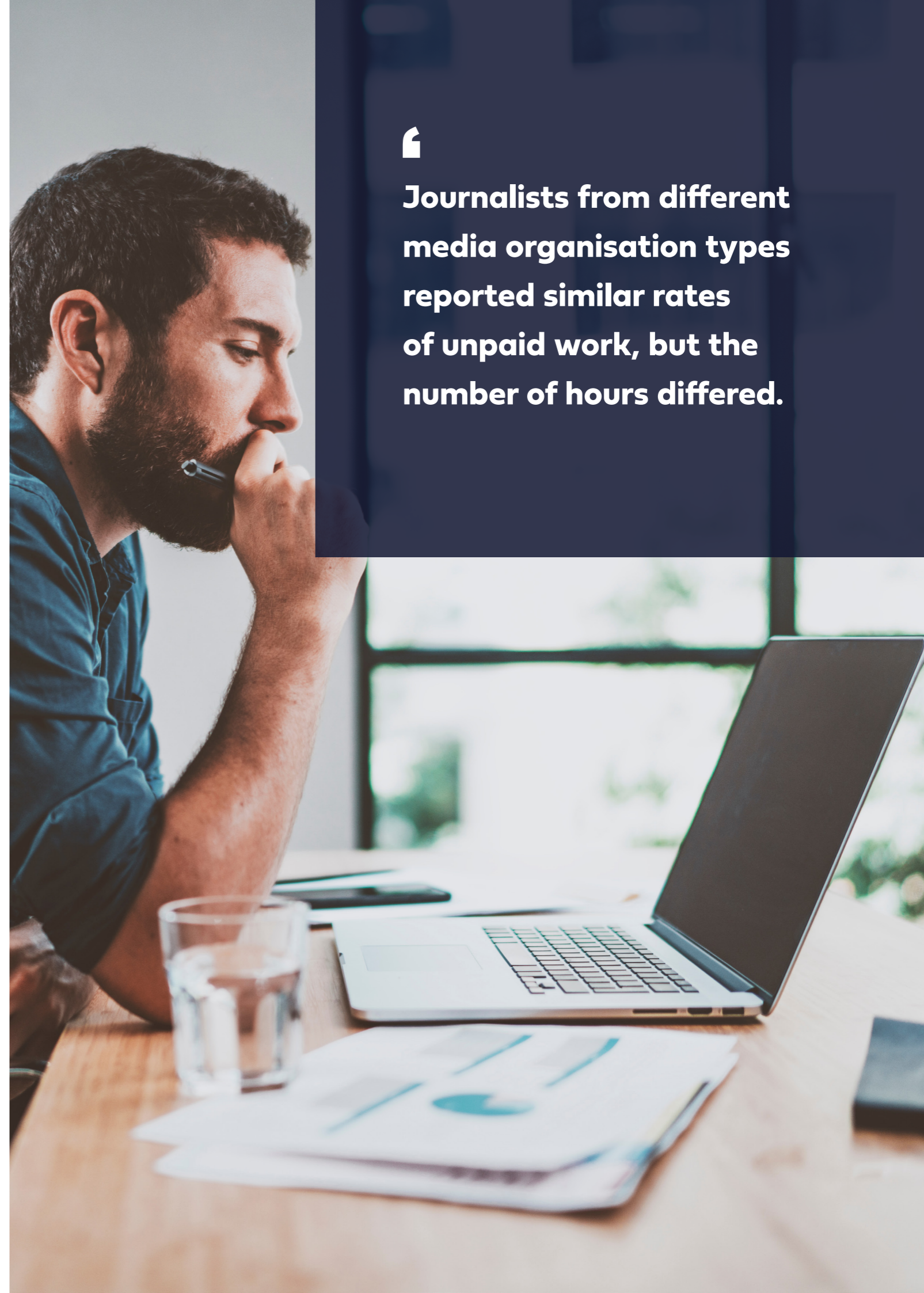
More than 10 hours a week



- Blogger
- Chief-of-staff
- Columnist
- Editor
- Journalist/reporter
- Photojournalist/cameraperson
- Presenter/announcer
- Producer
- Publisher

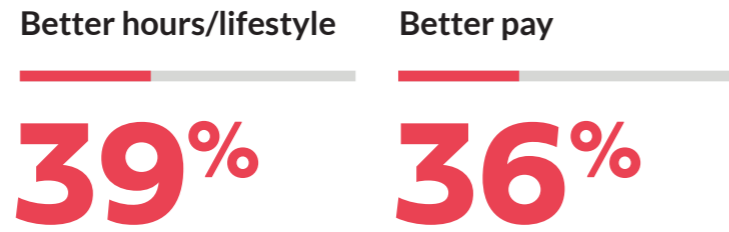
FIGURE 26: Unpaid work (media role)

Journalists from different media organisation types reported similar rates of unpaid work, but the number of hours differed.



Comparisons to PR

The most common reasons for journalists to switch to public relations work were...



Journalists moving to PR work

In 2022 Medianet also conducted a survey on the work of PR professionals. Of the 291 respondents, more than a third (35%) had previously worked as a journalist before changing professions.

Respondents offered a variety of other reasons for changing to PR, including being made redundant in journalism jobs and causes associated with a changing industry.

The most common reasons for changing to PR were better hours/lifestyle (39%) and better pay (36%). The next most commonly cited reasons were looking for a change or work (24%) and more job security (20%).

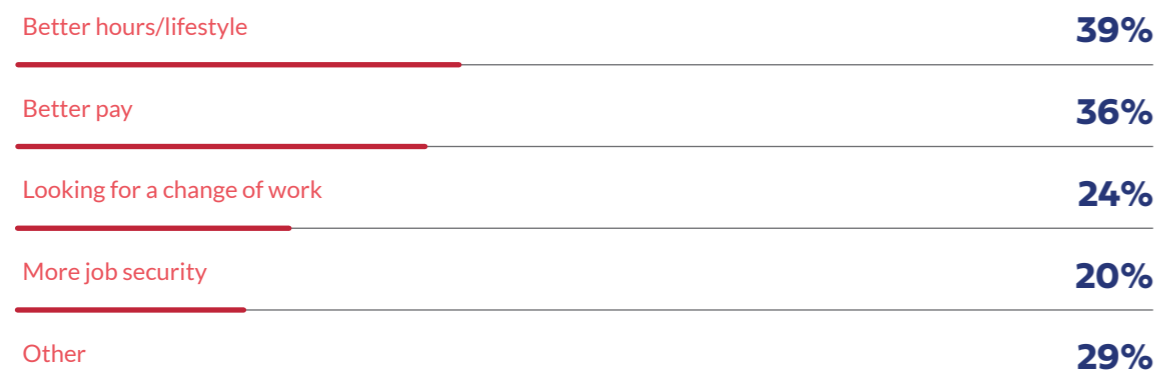


FIGURE 27: Reasons former journalists changed to PR roles

Comparisons to PR: Pay

On average, PR respondents were found to earn more than journalist survey respondents, with almost half of PR professionals (47%) earning over \$100,000 per year compared to a quarter of journalists (25%).

The most common pay bracket for PR professionals was between \$80,000 and \$99,999 per year. This was followed by the \$60,000 to \$79,999 per year bracket and then the \$100,000 to \$119,999 per year pay bracket.

The gender pay gap was also reflected in the PR survey, with male PR professionals more highly represented in the higher pay brackets. However, unlike the journalist survey, male PR professionals reported far higher rates of earning less than \$60,000 per year or more than \$100,000 per year, with female respondents much more highly represented in the \$60,000 to \$99,999 pay bracket.

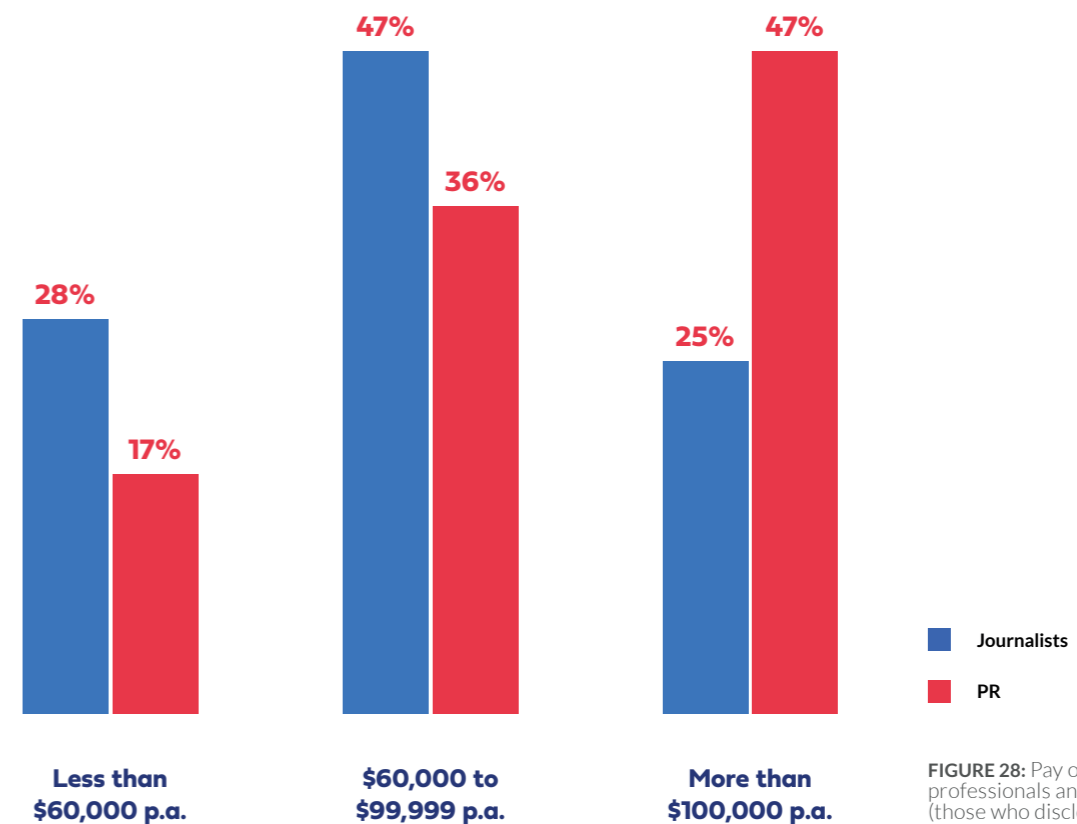


FIGURE 28: Pay of PR professionals and journalists (those who disclosed)

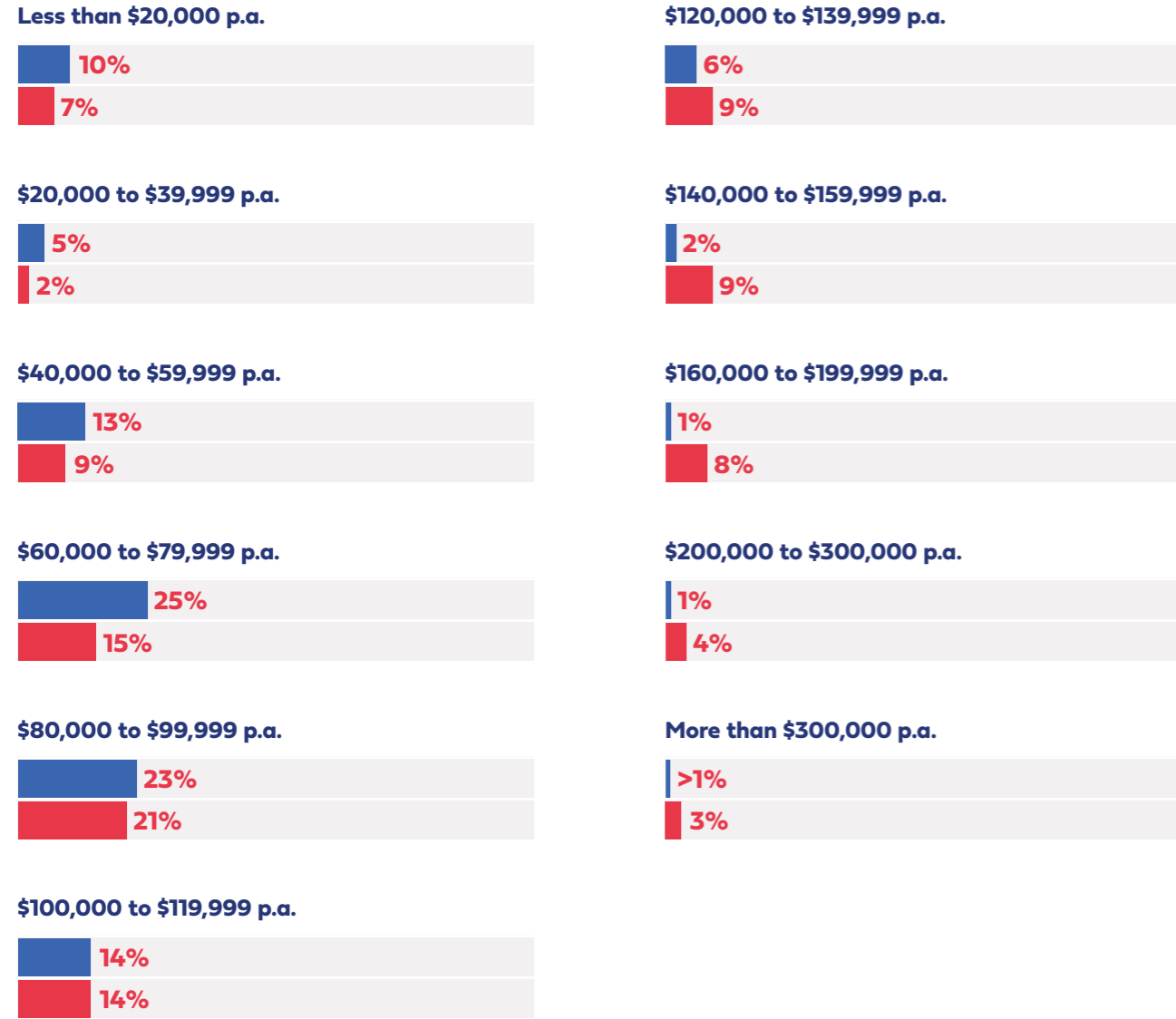
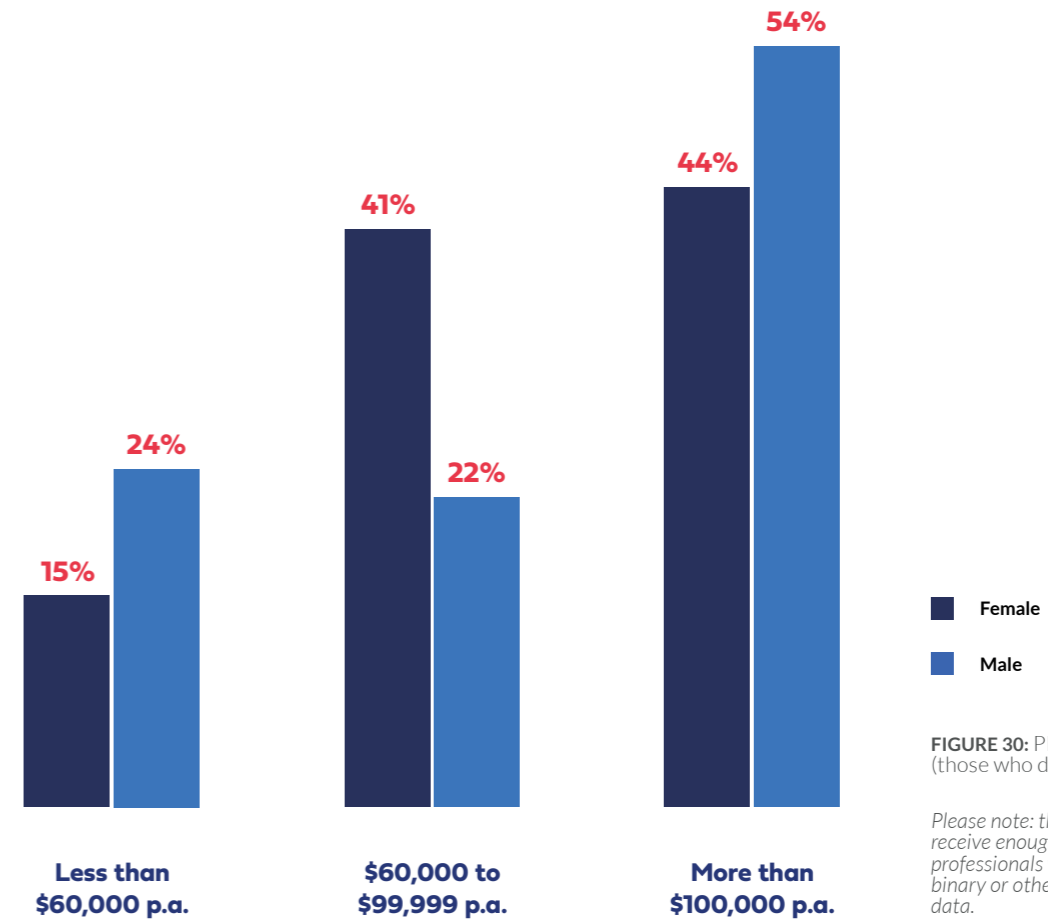


FIGURE 29: Pay of journalists and PR Professionals by pay bracket (those who disclosed)



On average, PR respondents were found to earn more than journalist survey respondents, with almost half of PR professionals (47%) earning over \$100,000 per year compared to a quarter of journalists (25%).



Female
Male

FIGURE 30: PR pay based on gender (those who disclosed)

Please note: this survey did not receive enough responses from PR professionals who identify as non-binary or other gender to analyse this data.

Comparisons to PR: Unpaid work

Overall, PR and journalist survey respondents were found to do the same amount of unpaid work each week.

Many said they were expected to be on-call or contactable by both journalists and clients outside of their work hours.

Several PR survey respondents noted unpaid work was often not overtime but instead doing volunteer or pro bono PR.



Overall, PR and journalist survey respondents were found to do the same amount of unpaid work each week.

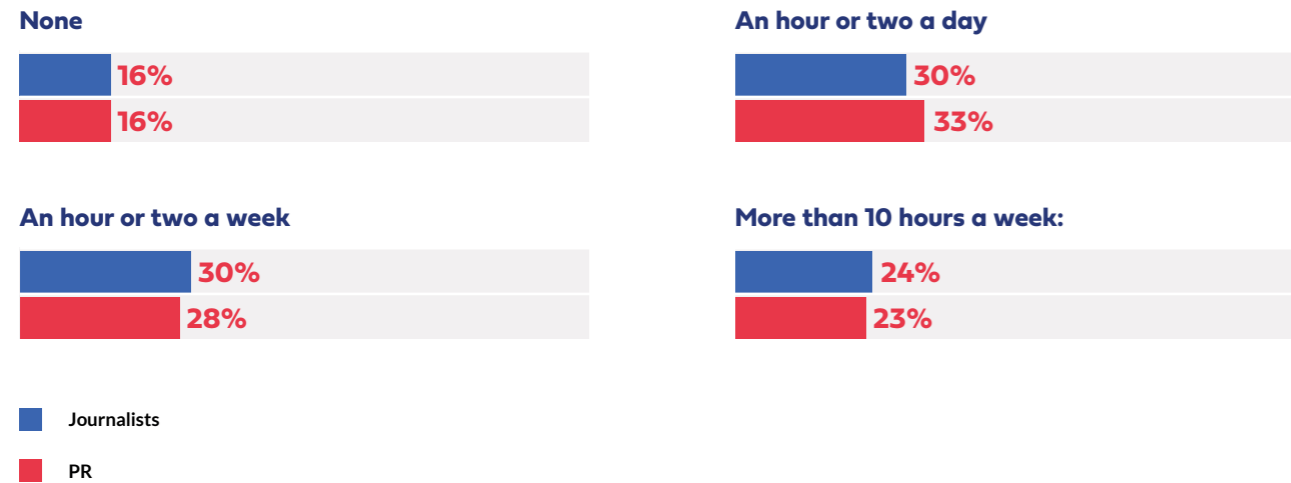


FIGURE 31: Unpaid work

Comparisons to PR: Burnout

A slightly higher percentage of surveyed journalists had experienced burnout compared to PR professionals, although more than two thirds of respondents from both professions said they had at some point in their current industry.

Once again, many PR survey respondents emphasised the challenge of being constantly on-call for journalists and having to manage high or unrealistic expectations from clients.

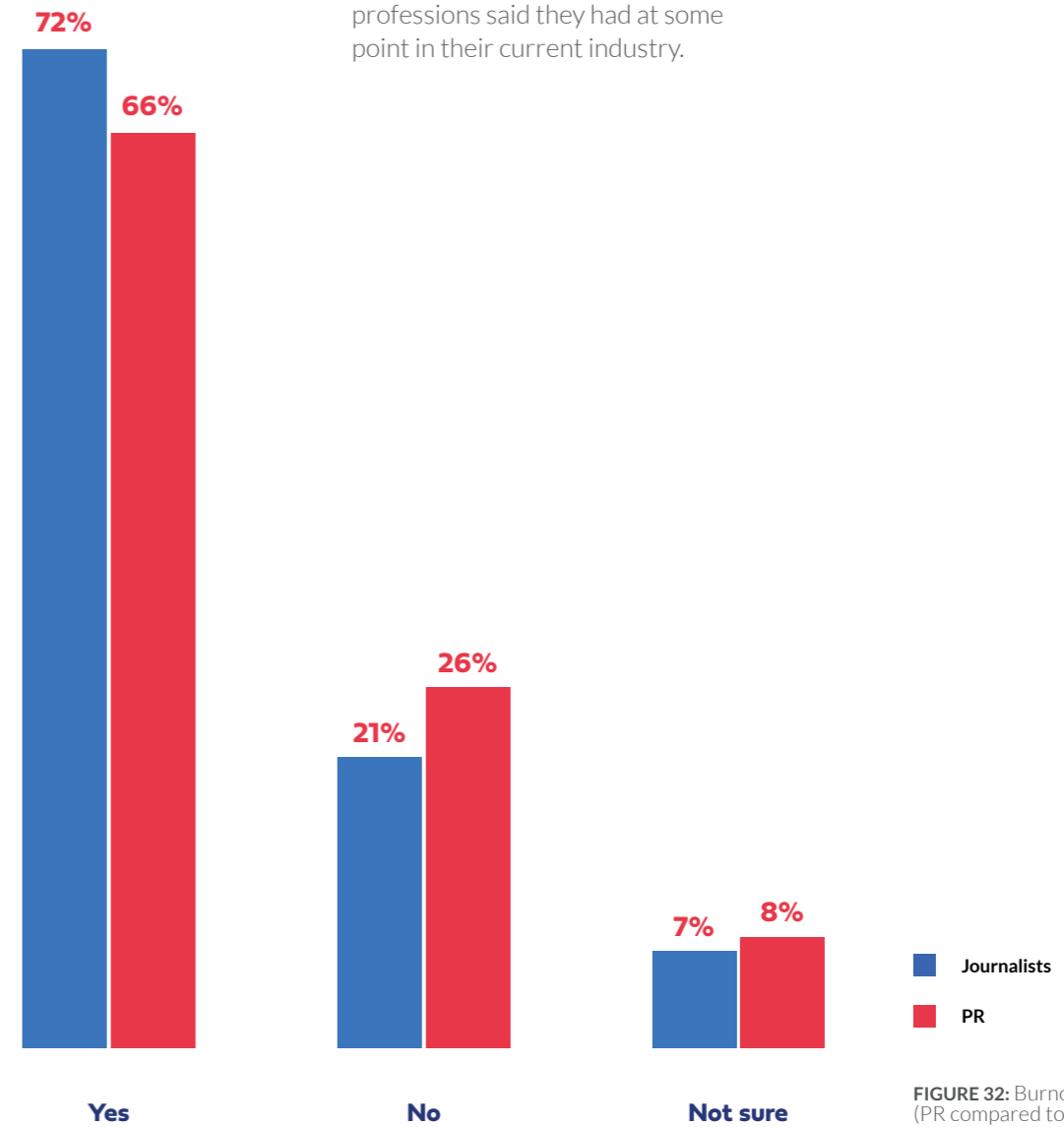


FIGURE 32: Burnout in media work (PR compared to journalists)

PR is a 24/7 job... The pressure and hours are literally insane.

I have been expected to work from 6am to 10pm at night and be on call on weekends. That was just the norm. I was often responding to journalist inquiries on Christmas Day, and every public holiday.

Comparisons to PR: Personal challenges

For journalists, money, changes in workload, uncertainty about the future and mental health proved the most common greatest personal challenges in 2022 overall.

A smaller percentage of PR professionals responded that money was their greatest challenge, with changes in workload and mental health proving more challenging for PR overall in 2022.

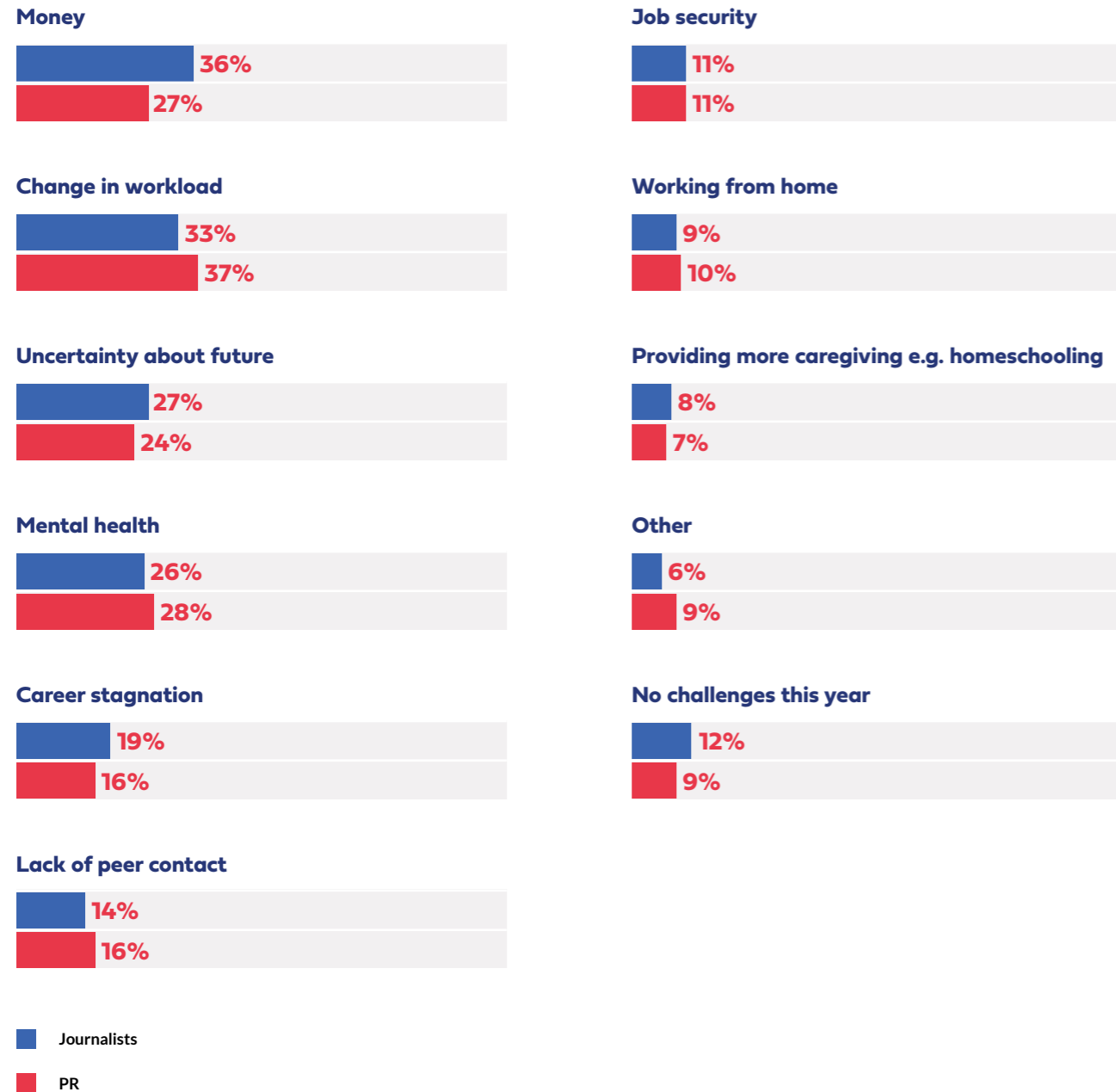


FIGURE 33: Greatest personal challenges in 2022

PR and journalist interactions and relationships

Surveyed PR professionals were asked how they would describe their normal interactions with journalists. The majority (60%) said these were generally positive, 16% said they were generally neutral, and 11% said they were always positive. Only 2% of respondents said they were generally negative.

Many respondents pointed out that it can be quite rare to receive a response from journalists, acknowledging the challenging deadlines and time pressures many journalists are working under.

PR survey respondents were also asked to identify up to three of their biggest obstacles to getting PR for their business or their clients. More than half said finding/contacting the right journalists or coming up with a news story or angle were one of their biggest obstacles (53% and 51% of respondents respectively). Other common obstacles were reaching enough journalists/newsrooms (28%), fulfilling the requests of journalists (21%) and being or training a good spokesperson (15%).

Of those who reported that 'other' factors were their biggest obstacle, many noted journalists' time constraints as a challenge.

There are so few journalists covering so many beats across so many outlets you're thrilled when you even get a decline.

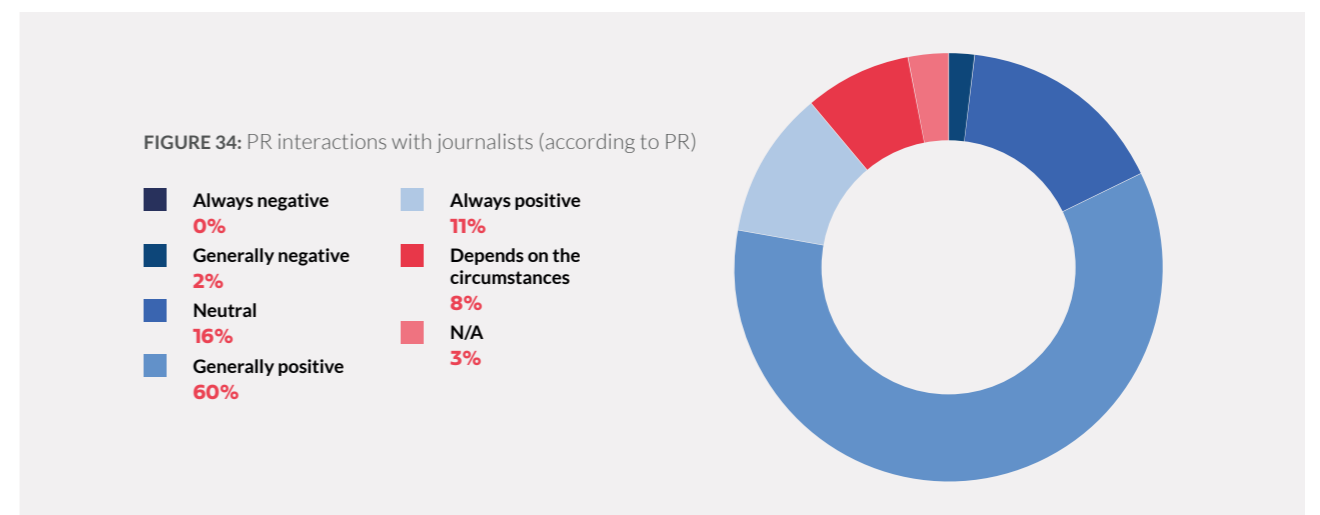


FIGURE 34: PR interactions with journalists (according to PR)

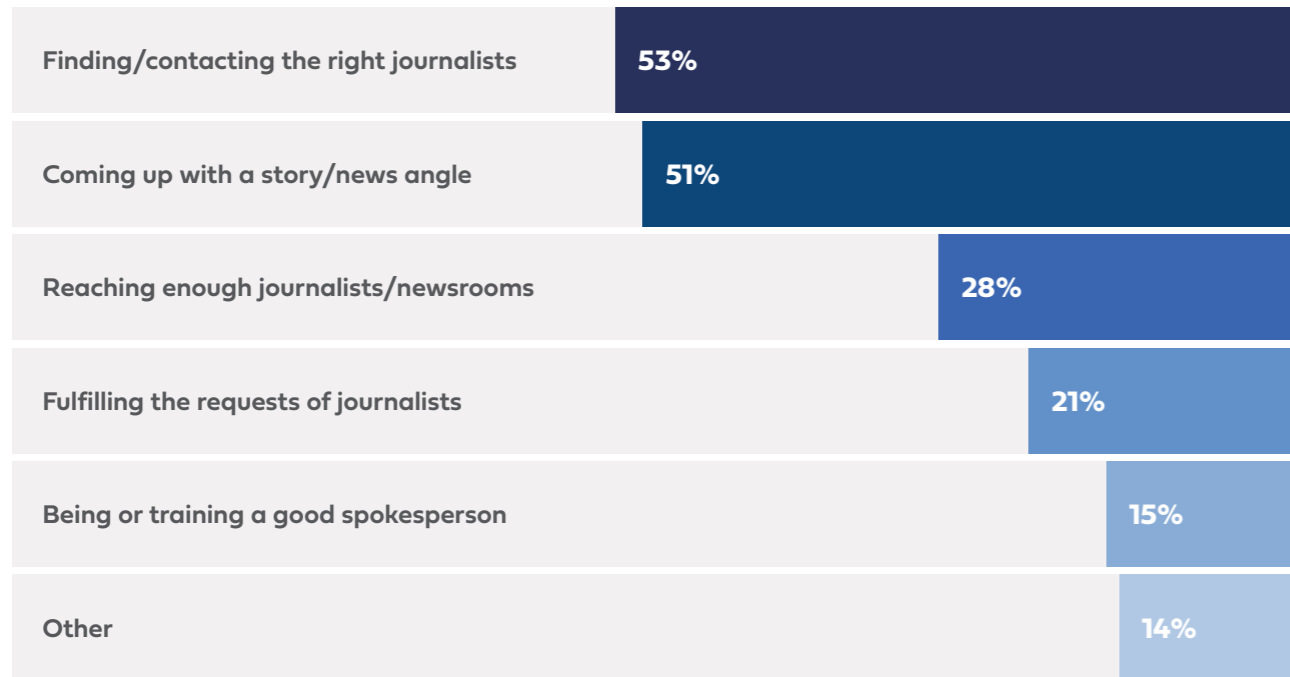
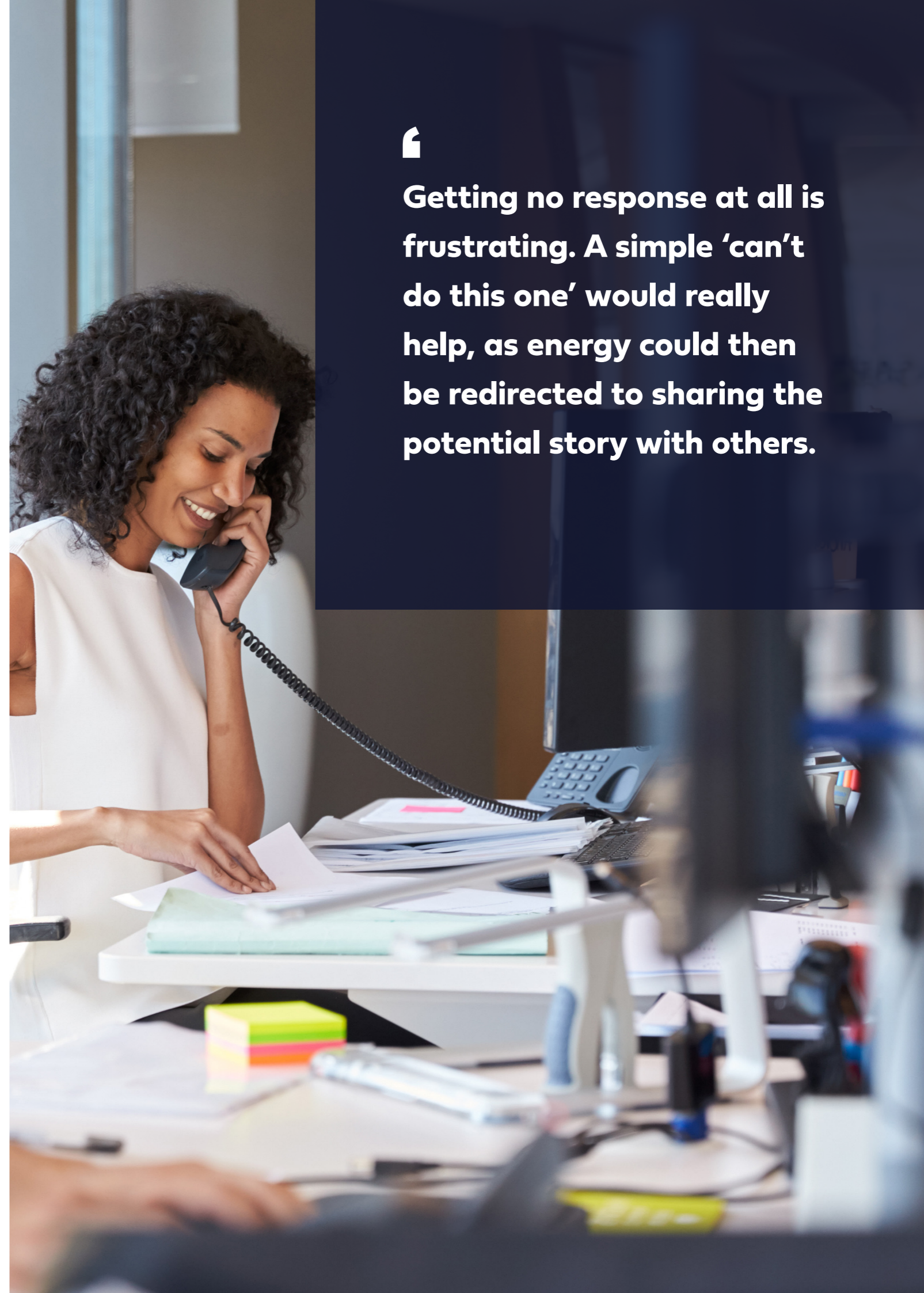


FIGURE 35: Biggest obstacles to getting PR

I've known many of my media contacts for more than two decades, so they're also my friends and colleagues now.

Journalists get swamped with stories so they can become pretty grumpy sometimes when we do follow ups.

Building relationships with journalists is incredibly important. Before pitching a story to a specific journalist I make sure to read their latest stories so I know they have an interest in what I am sending to them. Sending journalists irrelevant pitches will only sour a relationship and make you lose out in the long run.



Getting no response at all is frustrating. A simple 'can't do this one' would really help, as energy could then be redirected to sharing the potential story with others.

02.

Journalists' challenges and threats to the media



Personal challenges

Journalists were asked to select up to three factors which had been their biggest challenge in 2022, with money, changes in workload, uncertainty about the future and mental health proving the most common challenges overall.

Compared to Medianet's 2021 survey, which was conducted following a year of extended lockdowns and pandemic restrictions for many respondents, more journalists reported experiencing no challenges in 2022 (12% of journalists compared to 5% in 2021). Journalists in 2022 reported being less challenged overall by working from home, uncertainty about future, mental health, lack of peer contact and job security in 2022.

However, the percentage of respondents who reported money to be one of their greatest challenges for the year doubled, with 36% of respondents finding money to be one of the biggest challenges in 2022 compared to 18% in 2021. Journalists were also more challenged by career stagnation and changes in workload compared to the previous year.

Male journalists reported higher rates of experiencing no challenges in 2022 (16% compared to 9% of female and 8% of non-binary respondents). Female journalists reported higher rates of being most challenged by career stagnation, changes in workload and uncertainty about the future, job security, mental health, money and providing more caregiving compared to men. Men reported being marginally more challenged by lack of peer contact. Non-binary journalists reported being significantly more challenged overall by mental health (46%).

Respondents in the 23 to 29 year old age bracket reported significantly higher rates of being most challenged by mental health and lack of peer contact. Almost half of all respondents in this age bracket (41%) highlighted mental health as being one of their greatest challenges in 2022. Younger journalists were also significantly more challenged by money related issues, with 42% of respondents under 40 years old reporting it to be a challenge (compared to 30% of those 40 years and older). Older respondents reported being more challenged by uncertainty about the future compared to younger journalists.

36%

of respondents found money to be one of the biggest challenges in 2022 compared to 18% in 2021.



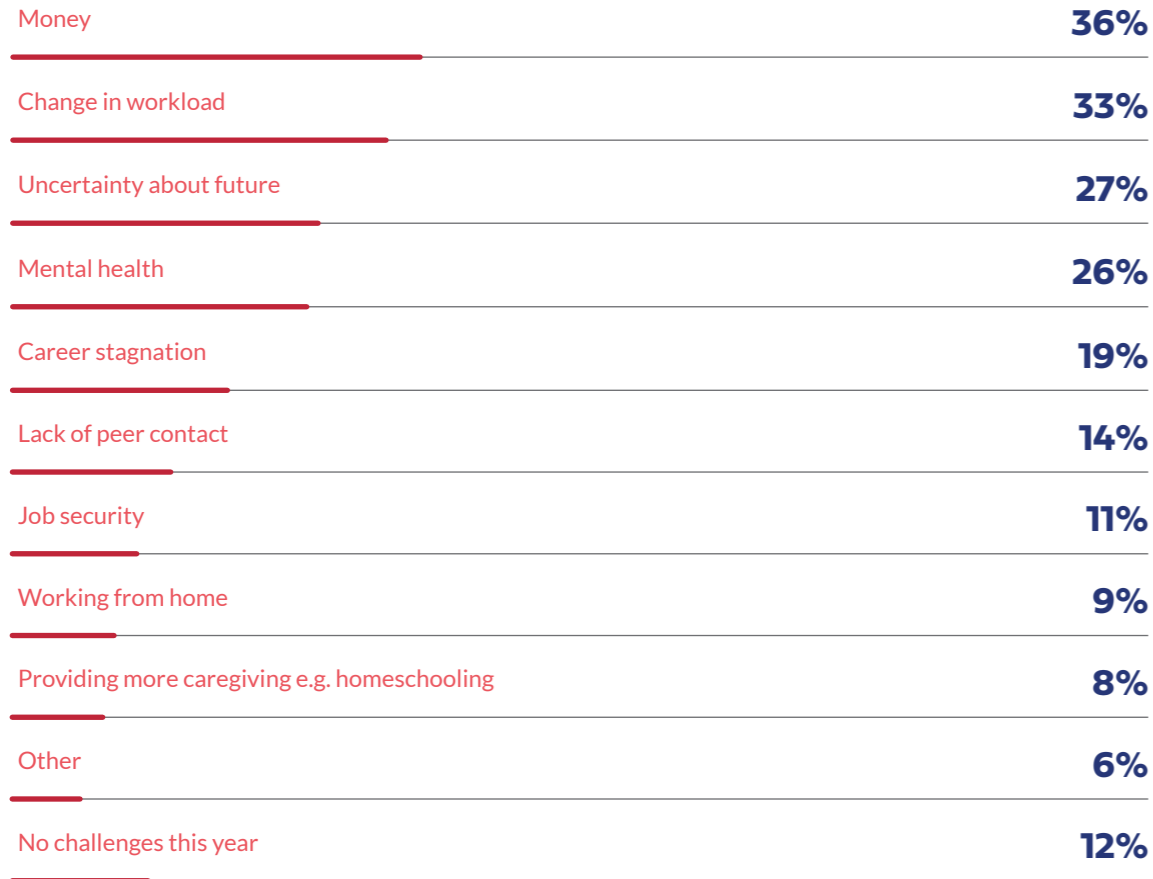


FIGURE 36: Greatest challenges experienced by journalists in 2022

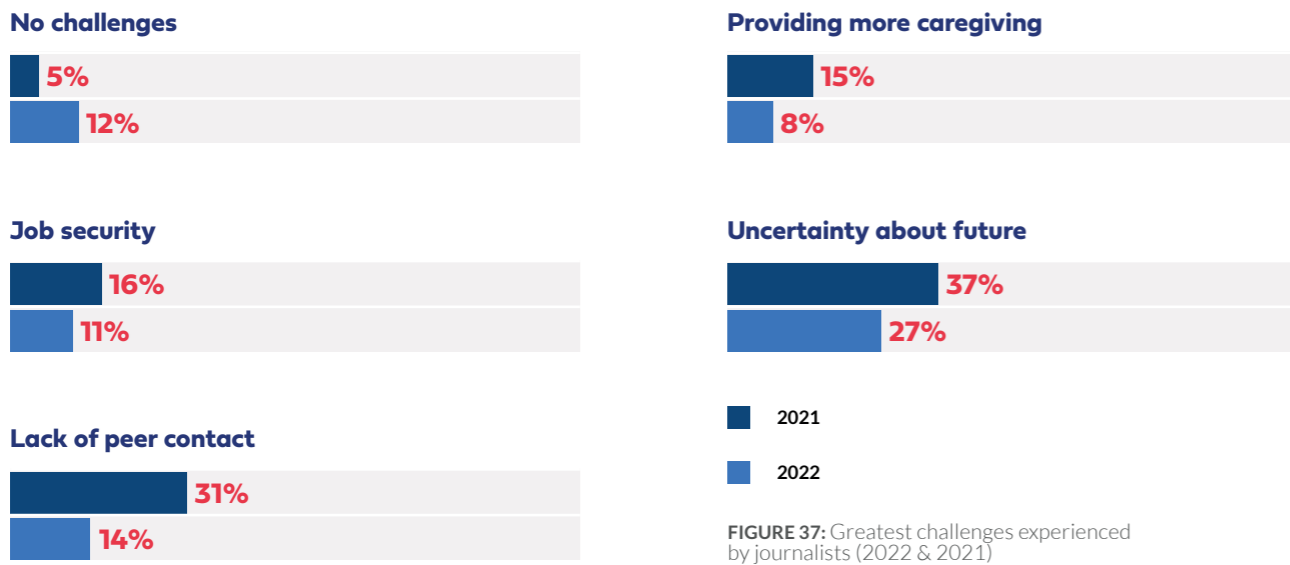


FIGURE 37: Greatest challenges experienced by journalists (2022 & 2021)

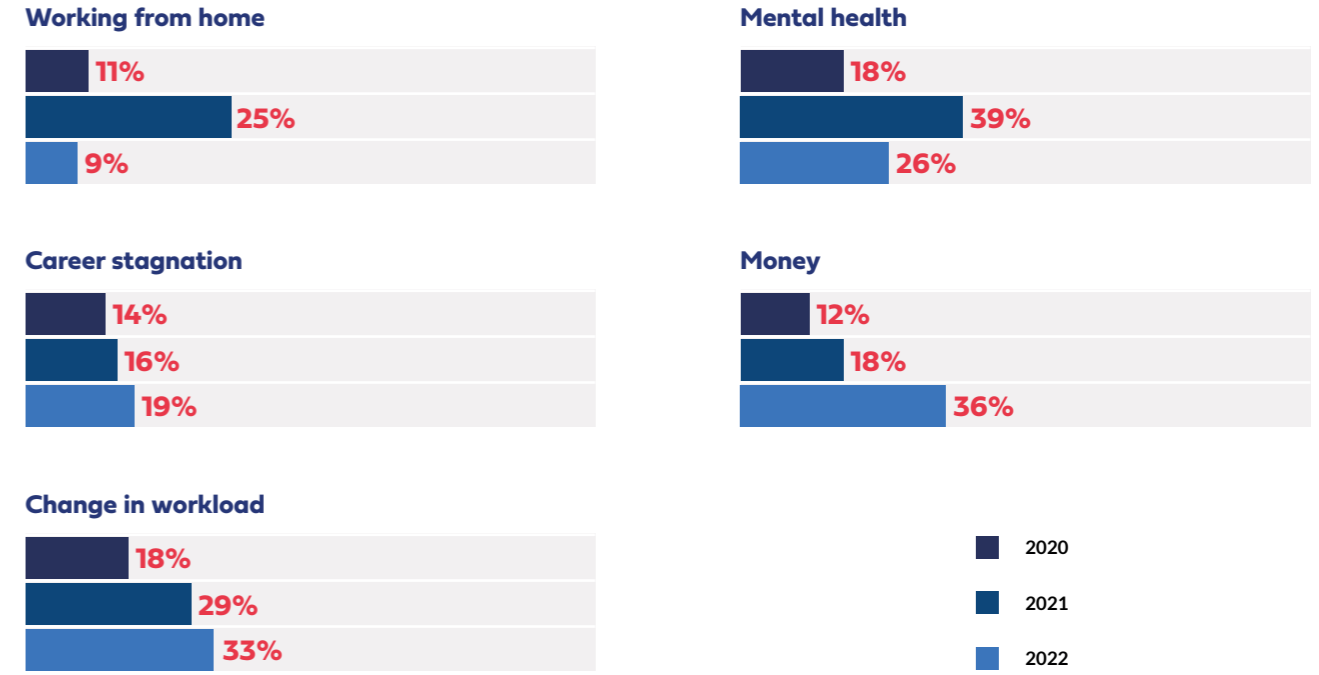


FIGURE 38: Greatest challenges experienced by journalists (2020, 2021 & 2022)

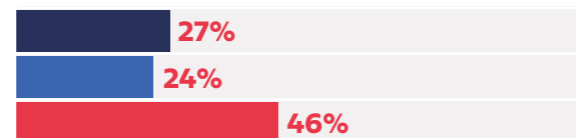


Respondents in the 23 to 29 year old age bracket reported significantly higher rates of being most challenged by mental health and lack of peer contact. Almost half of all respondents in this age bracket (41%) highlighted mental health as being one of their greatest challenges in 2022.

No challenges



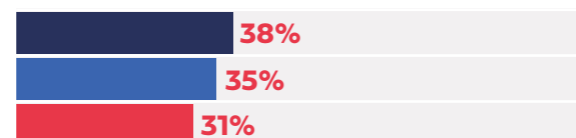
Mental health



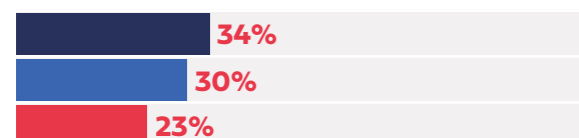
Career stagnation



Money



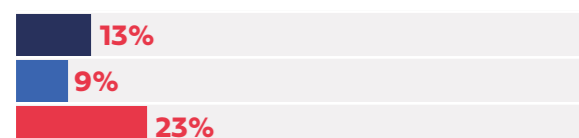
Change in workload



Providing more caregiving



Job security



Uncertainty about future



Lack of peer contact



Working from home



- Female
- Male
- Non-binary

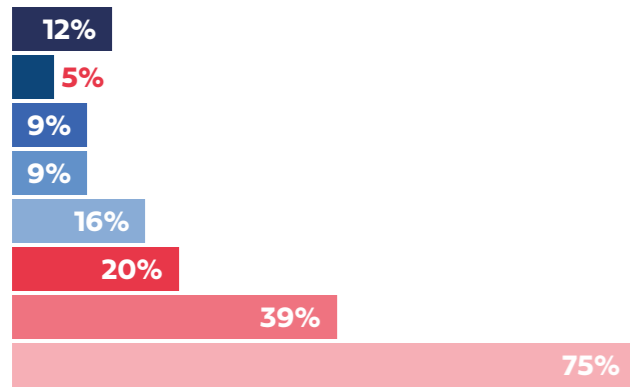
FIGURE 39: Greatest challenges experienced by journalists in 2022 (gender)

Please note: Data from respondents who identified their gender as non-binary may not accurately reflect this demographic due to a small sample size.

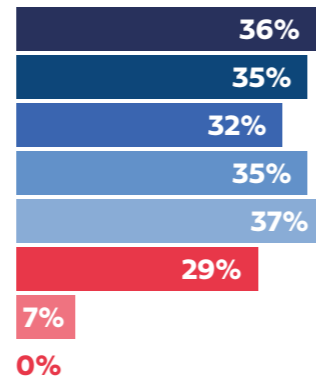


Male journalists reported higher rates of experiencing no challenges in 2022 (16% compared to 9% of female and 8% of non-binary respondents).

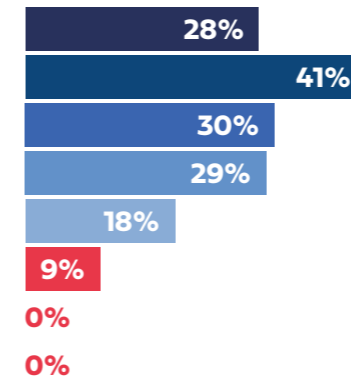
No challenges



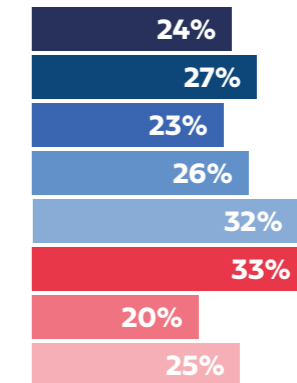
Change in workload



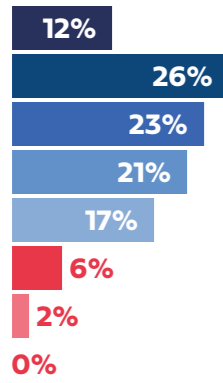
Mental health



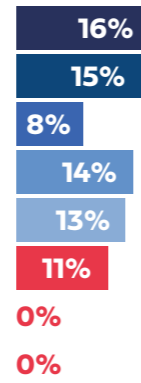
Uncertainty about future



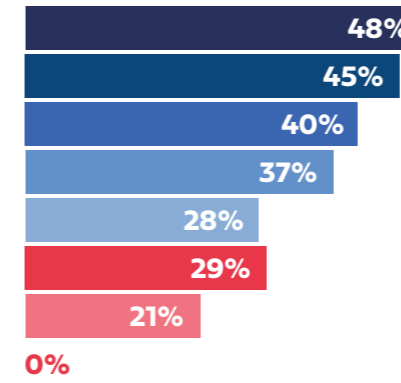
Career stagnation



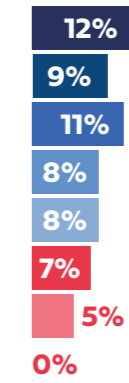
Job security



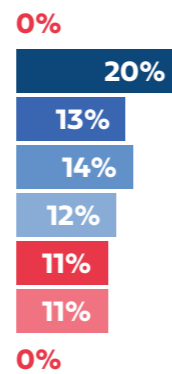
Money



Working from home



Lack of peer contact



Providing more caregiving

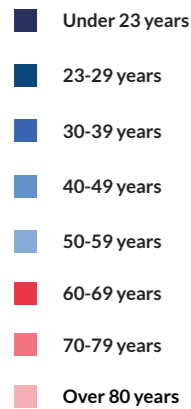
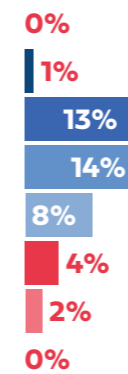


FIGURE 40: Greatest challenges experienced by journalists in 2022 (age)

FIGURE 40 continued

Burnout

Seventy-two percent of journalists said they had experienced burnout in their media work. Respondents highlighted being overworked, underpaid and short-staffed as the causes of their burnout, along with tight deadlines, feeling undervalued, and covering difficult news stories including floods, war and COVID.

Many said they felt unsupported by their media organisation or management, and/or that they have been expected to increase their workload to cover the work of staff who have been made redundant or quit (instead of hiring replacements).

A significant number of journalists reported having nervous breakdowns, mental health issues, or having to take time off or leave their job due to the stress of the work.

Younger journalists reported significantly higher burnout rates. Eighty-four percent of journalists under 40 years old identified having experienced burnout in their media work, compared to 69% aged 40 to 59 years old and 56% for journalists aged over 60 years.

Female and non-binary respondents also reported significantly higher burnout rates (See Figure 43).

Journalists currently working in TV reported the highest levels of burnout throughout their careers, followed by digital journalists. Full-time employed journalists had also experienced more burnout, followed by journalists working in casual positions. Those working in the city also reported higher burnout rates.

“The nature of news is that it’s unpredictable and often you feel like you’re running a bit of a race without being quite sure if there’s an end in sight.”

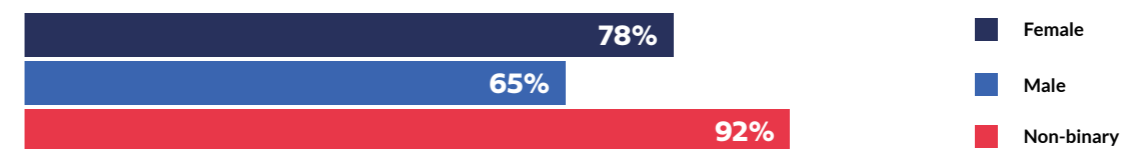
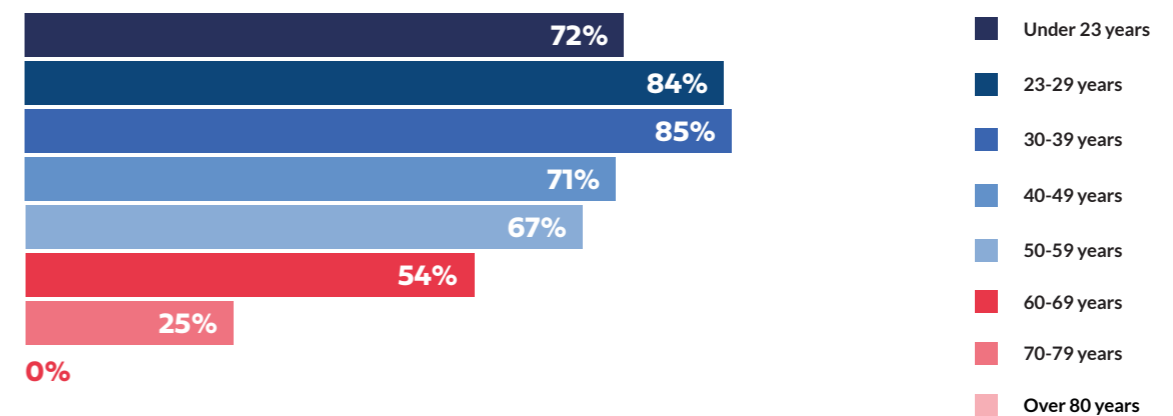
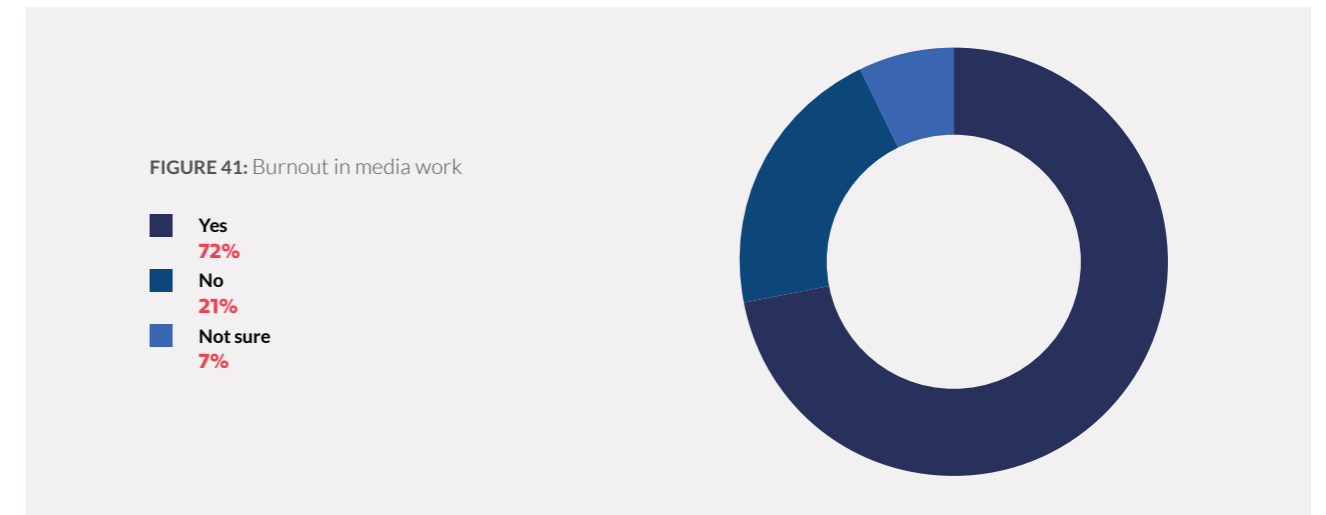


FIGURE 42: Journalists who have experienced burnout in media work, by age

FIGURE 43: Journalists who have experienced burnout in media work, by gender

Please note: Data from respondents who identified their gender as non-binary may not accurately reflect this demographic due to a small sample size.

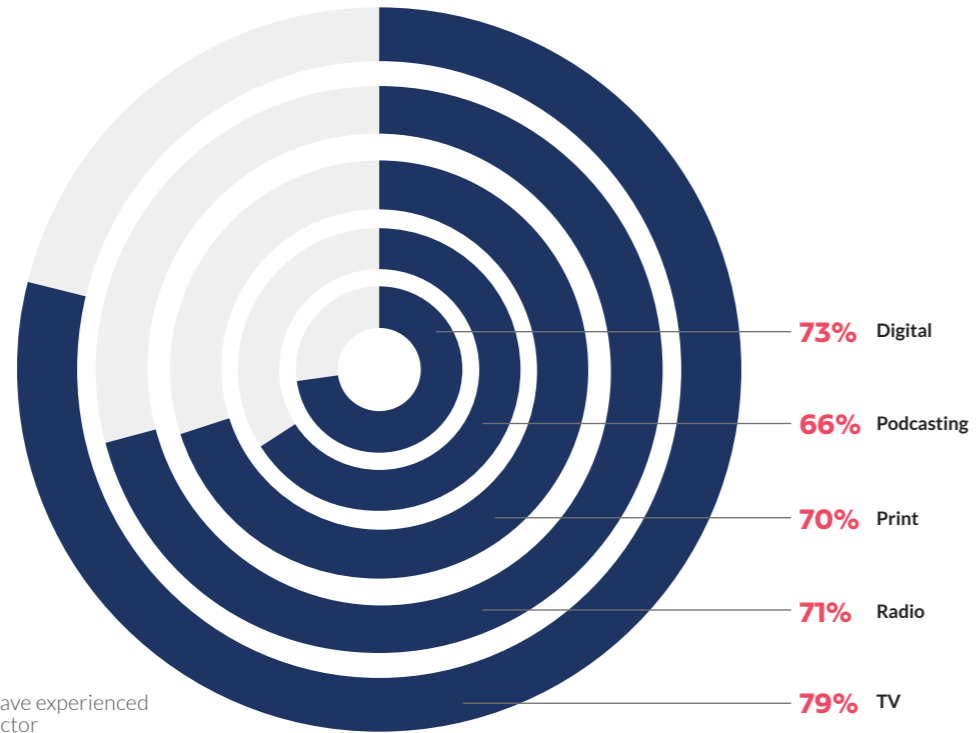


FIGURE 44: Journalists who have experienced burnout in media work, by sector



FIGURE 45: Journalists who have experienced burnout in media work, by job type



FIGURE 46: Journalists who have experienced burnout in media work by journalist location

I am at a stage where I just waddle into work, do the work like a drone worker bee and go home with no motivation to do the things I enjoy doing. I just feel tired all the time and management does not do anything to help with this, even when I ask for help.

I have worked regular 12 hour days. It's a nightmare if I am sick and have to have a day off, there is no one to fill in.

In every media role I've had I've covered more than one role. I actually developed a stress related endocrine disorder as a result of the intense pressure and extreme workflow.

Consecutive natural disasters and the pandemic have really worn me down. I'm doing this survey from a hotel room - I've been effectively living out of a suitcase for 6 weeks.

I had a nervous breakdown after covering a murder.

Abuse and harassment of journalists

Nearly half of journalist respondents (44%) said they had experienced abuse or harassment because of their profession and work in the media.

Of these respondents, 69% said they had experienced online written abuse or trolling and 53% had experienced in-person verbal abuse or harassment. Forty-four percent reported having received online threats, 23% had received in-person threats, and 5% had experienced physical abuse. Of the 7% of respondents who noted 'other' forms of abuse, half said they had received abusive phone calls, or "textline" abuse on talkback radio. Many respondents noted there was an increase in abuse rates and/or severity during COVID when reporting from related protests.

Generally respondents noted that the abuse and harassment was directed by members of the public, a smaller minority mentioned receiving abuse or bullying from colleagues.

Journalists covering most topic areas reported abuse or harassment rates of more than 46%, however the overall figure was skewed by the large proportion of respondents who cover entertainment and/or lifestyle (50% of survey respondents). Journalists reporting on crime/courts reported the highest rates of abuse or harassment (66%), followed by those covering religion.

Women and non-binary journalists experienced higher rates of abuse or harassment because of their media work, with 62% of non-binary journalists having experienced abuse or harassment, 47% of female journalists and 40% of male journalists.

Respondents in the 40 to 49 year age category reported the highest rates of abuse, while younger and older journalists both tended to have experienced less abuse in general.

Journalists working in TV reported significantly higher rates of abuse compared to other platforms, with 60% of TV journalists having experienced harassment or abuse due to their media work. Respondents working for publicly/government funded media organisations also reported higher rates of abuse and harassment (55%).

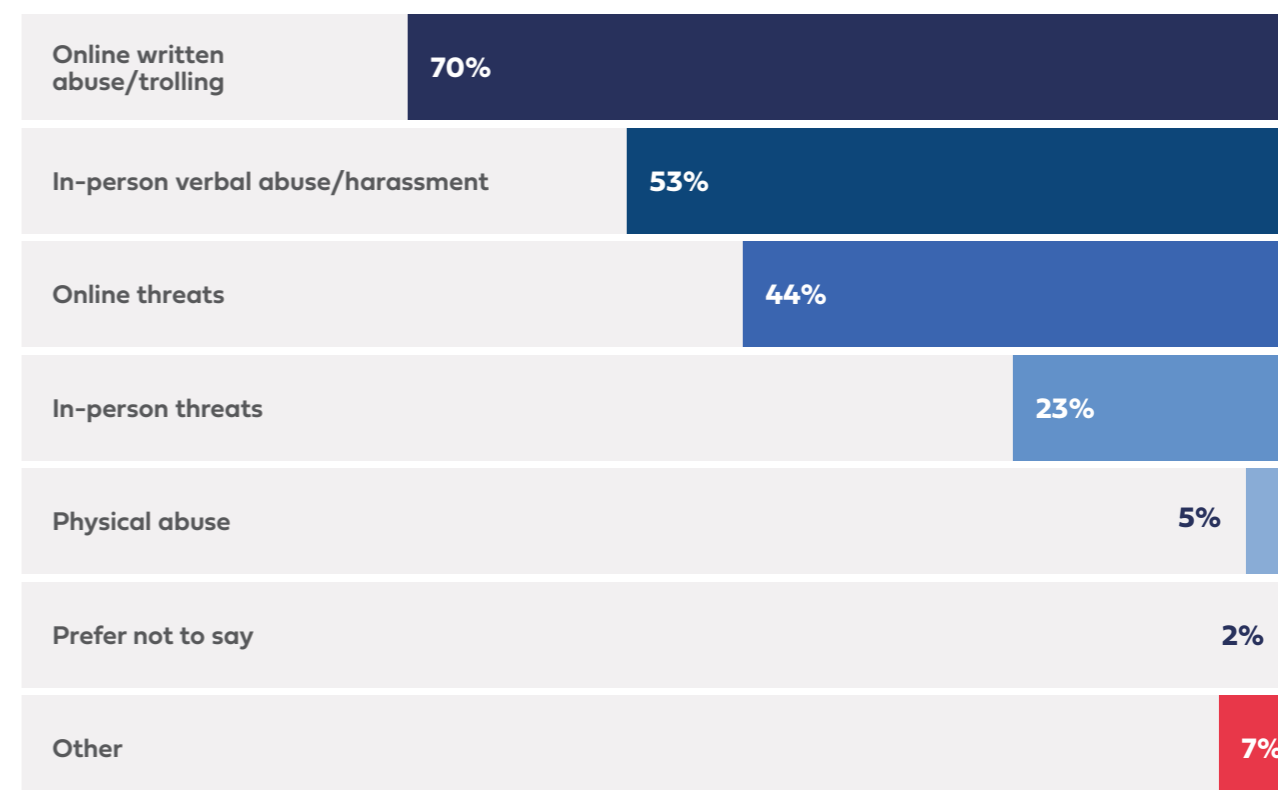
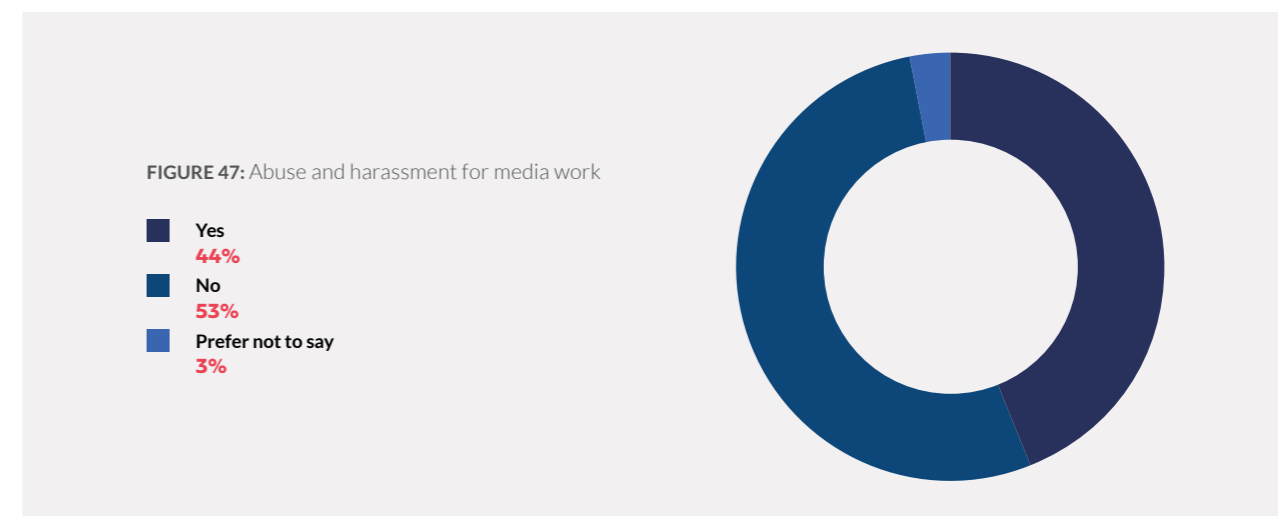




FIGURE 49: Abuse and harassment (journalists' gender)

Please note: Data from respondents who identified their gender as non-binary may not accurately reflect this demographic due to a small sample size.

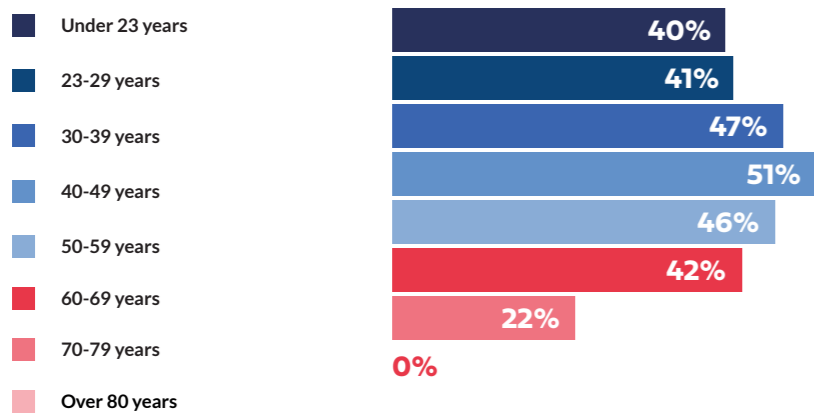


FIGURE 50: Abuse and harassment (journalists' age)



Police are also often very problematic in the field - I have been pushed, shoved, grabbed, thrown, and yelled at by police officers while doing my job, and doing that job within legal boundaries.

I've had death threats and threatening emails after stories people didn't like. Online trolling is commonplace.

Being touched / interrupted during a live cross.

Very nasty comments about personal appearance, or about a story.

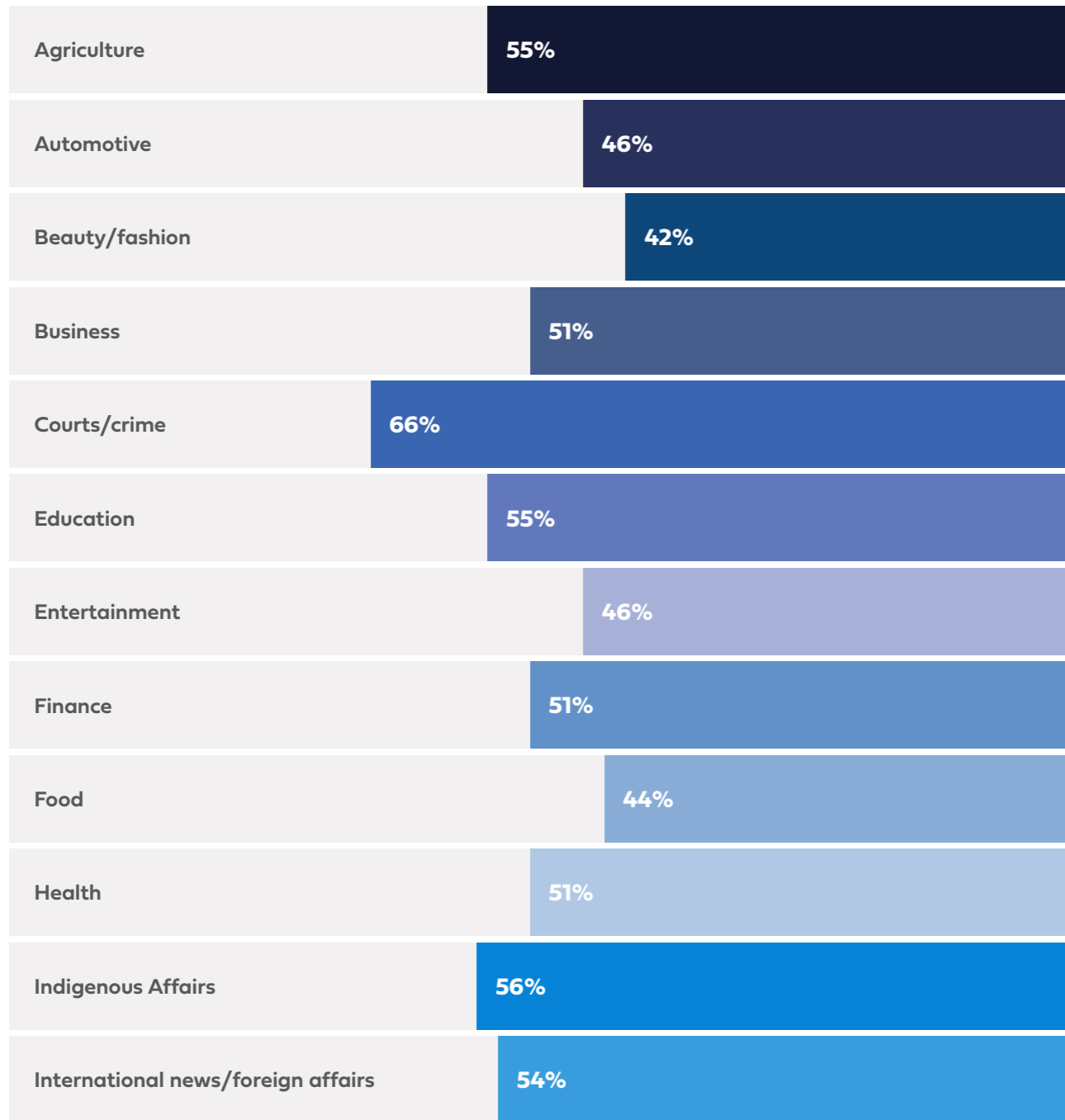


FIGURE 51: Abuse and harassment (journalists' topic area)

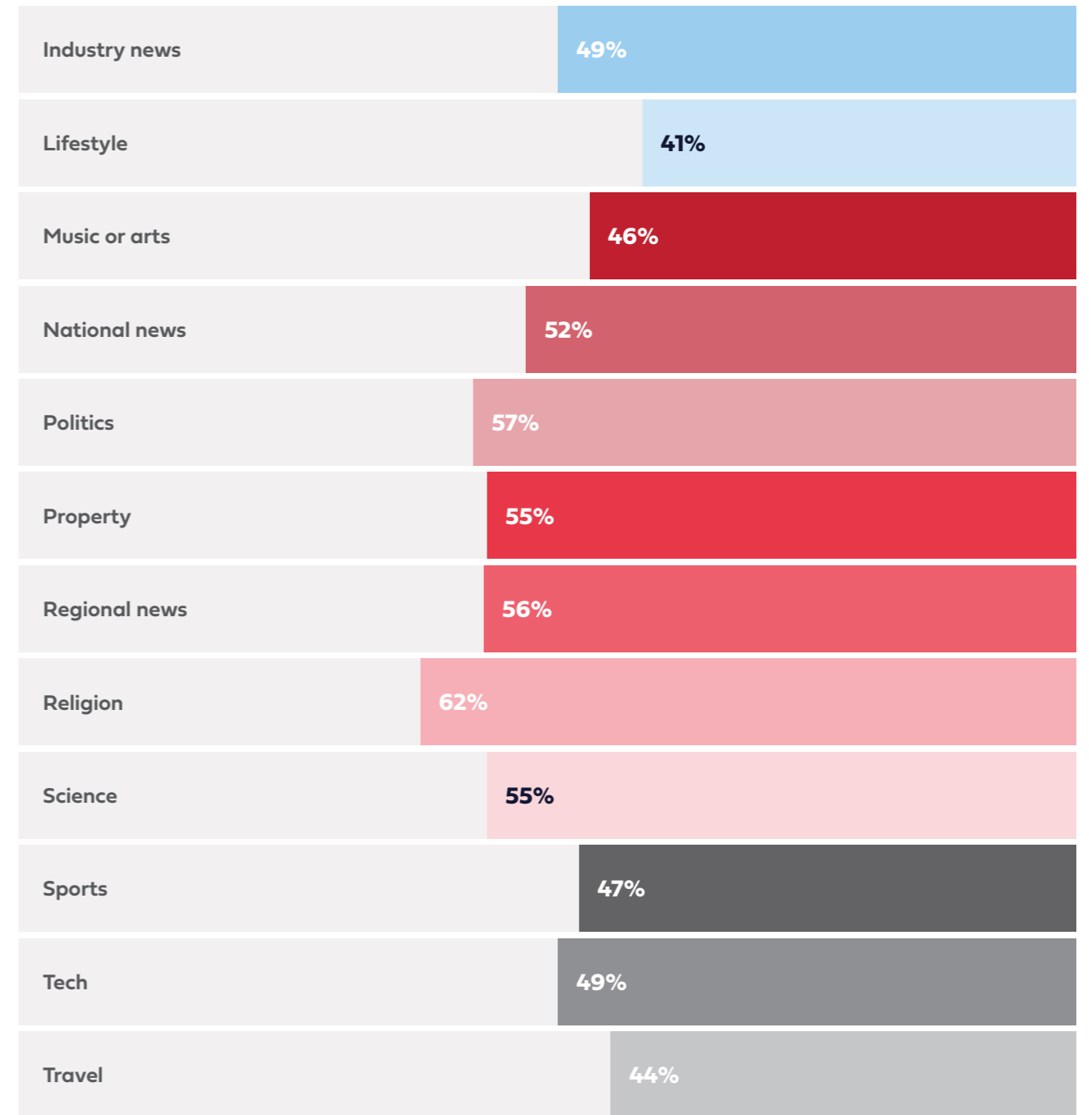


FIGURE 51 continued

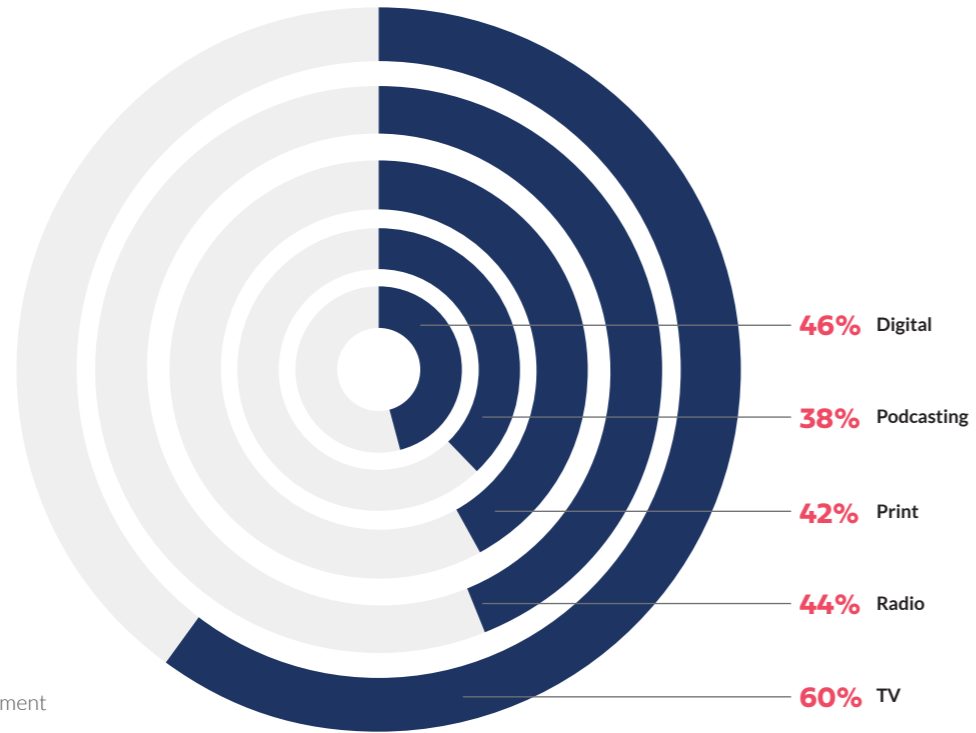


FIGURE 52: Abuse and harassment (journalists' sector)

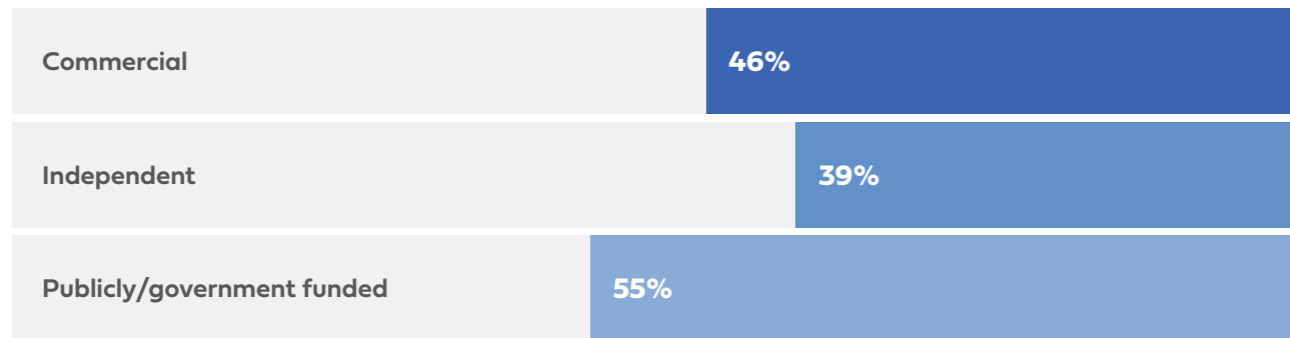


FIGURE 53: Abuse and harassment (journalists' media organisation)

I received an email with death and rape threats while I was working at community radio station.

Being a female in sport, I cop a bit of sexual harassment.

I have been spat on, yelled at, abused online by trolls, phoned and threatened...

Racial discrimination, prejudice and abuse

Of the 243 respondents who reported being of an ethnic background other than Australian non-Indigenous, New Zealander, English, Scottish or Irish, 22% said they had experienced racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse as part of their media work (12% of overall respondents had experienced this).

Lebanese respondents reported the highest rates of abuse (43%), followed by Indian (31%), Chinese (29%), Australian (Indigenous) (25%) and Italian (21%).

Women reported higher rates of having experienced racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse, with 13% of female respondents having experienced this compared to 9% of male and 8% of non-binary respondents.

Respondents in the 60 to 69 year age category reported the highest incidences of racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse.

FIGURE 54: Racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse of journalists

■ Yes
12%
■ No
86%
■ Prefer not to say
2%

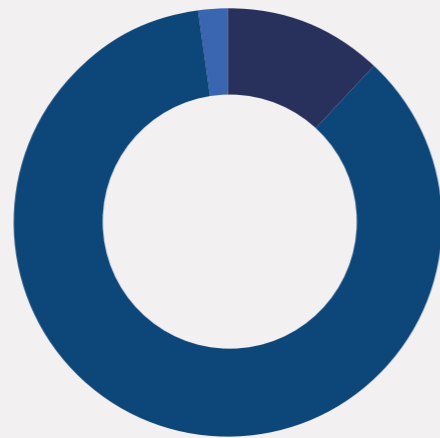
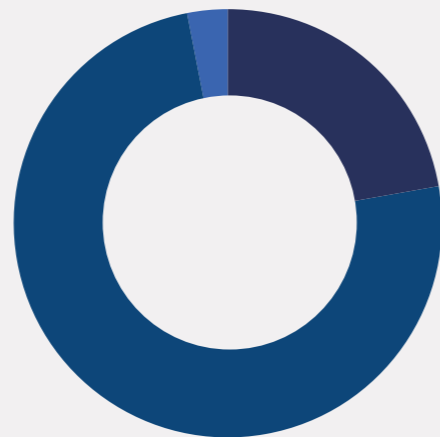


FIGURE 55: Racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse of journalists other than Australian non-Indigenous, New Zealander, English, Scottish or Irish

■ Yes
22%
■ No
74%
■ Prefer not to say
3%



Respondents aged 60 to 69 reported the highest rates of racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse.

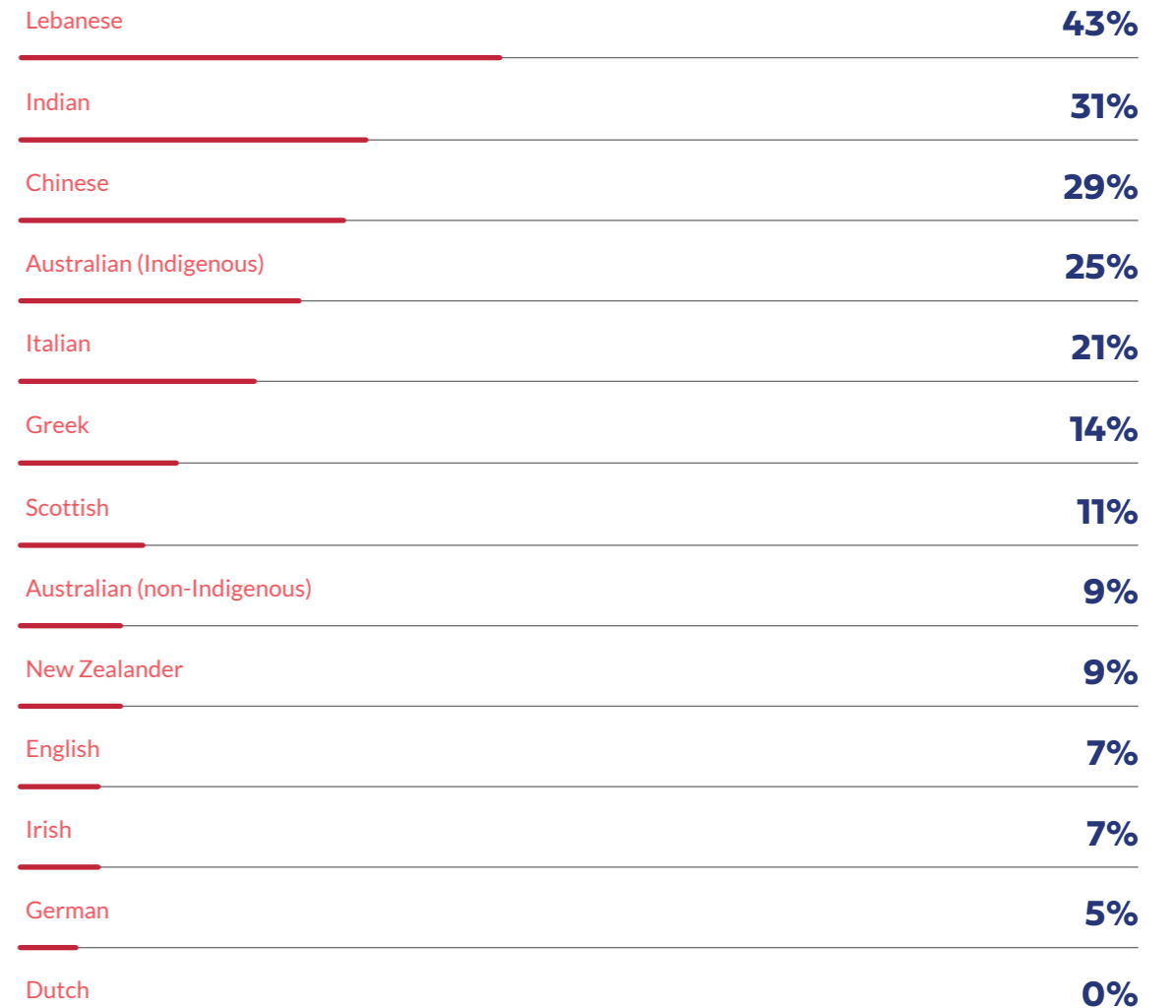


FIGURE 56: Racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse (journalists' ethnic background)



FIGURE 57: Racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse (journalists' gender)

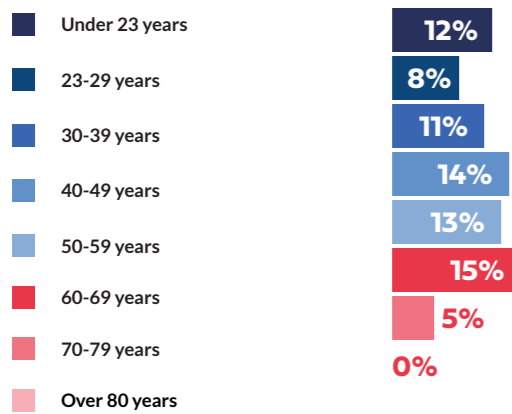


FIGURE 58: Racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse (journalists' age)



Women reported higher rates of having experienced racial discrimination, prejudice or abuse, with 13% of female respondents having experienced this compared to 9% of male and 8% of non-binary respondents.

Addressing representation and support for CALD journalists

Surveyed journalists were asked to identify how they think the media industry or their workplace could improve representation and support for people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD). The overwhelming majority of responses suggested more diverse hiring is needed, particularly in management or board positions.

Some also suggested addressing systemic barriers, providing more support within organisations and implementing quotas for diversity, although others raised how efforts needed to extend beyond "tokenism".

Many also raised how hiring should be diversified to include more people with disabilities and women in higher level roles.

There's good talk of allyship, but when it matters, people in my newsroom don't speak up. I think increased training could help, but it needs to be run by diverse people.

It's structural, it's about ensuring there are people from diverse background given early career training so there are pathways that lead to skills and then positions.

By giving us opportunities to have our voices platformed and treating us with equity.

🗨️ [We need to] hire/promote more people from diverse backgrounds to senior management positions.

🗨️ Accepting and embracing bilingualism would be great. Most organisations/companies find it hard to have employees who have English as a second language.

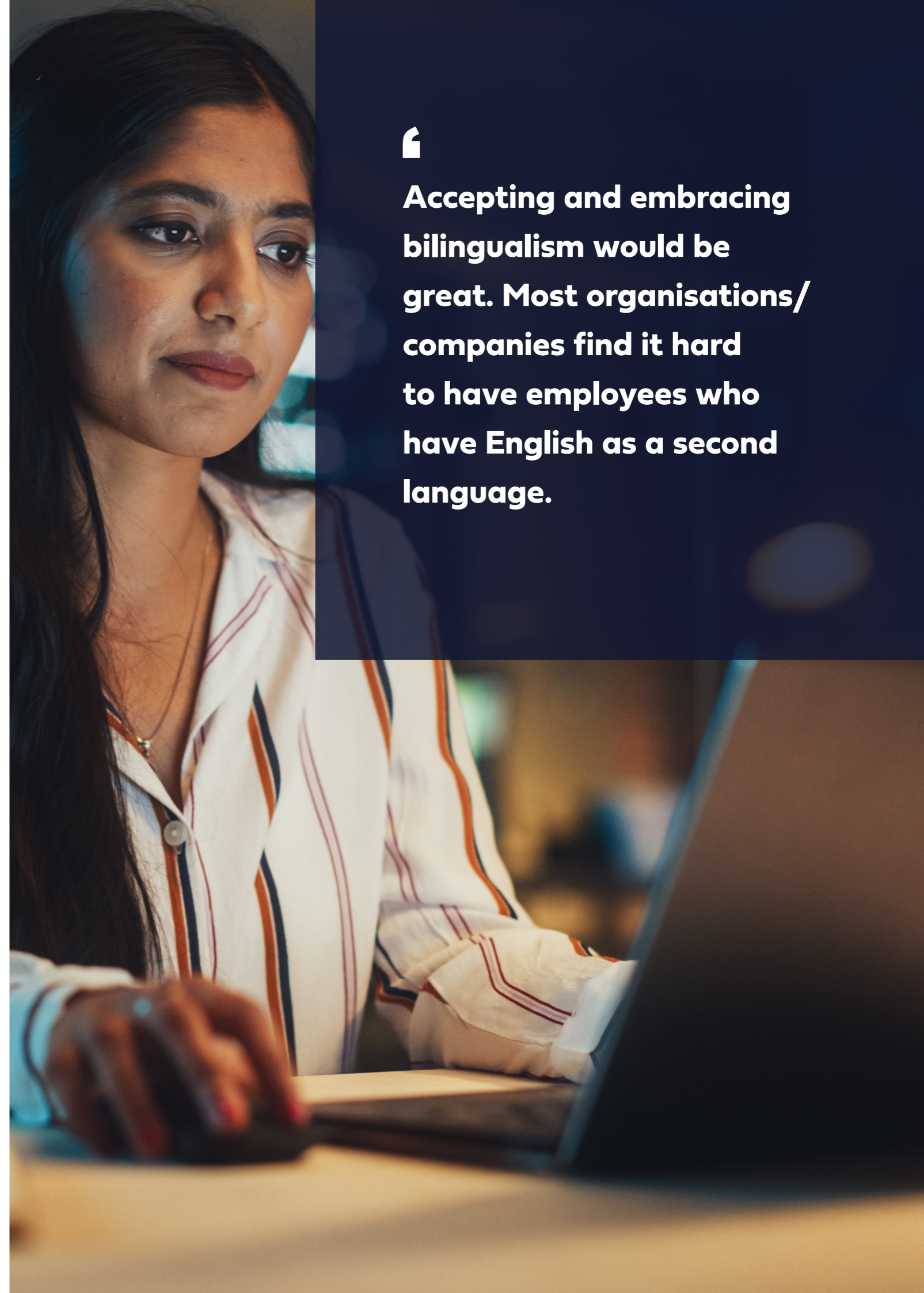
🗨️ The entertainment media industry should work to champion more artists of diverse cultural backgrounds and support their releases, rather than only report on them when they're negatively affected by something ie. harassed online / involved in a crime / speak out about their oppression.

🗨️ Entry level jobs in media start at 40-50k which is really only feasible for people who have family support, generational wealth or benefit from nepotism. And these people are usually white. If you come from a disadvantaged background and need to support a family, you literally can't intern for free or work for 40k a year. Media salaries do not do a great job at attracting a broad range of talent.

🗨️ Nearly every photojournalist in my city is a white male. This is not a coincidence or an accident. White men hire other white men above all other people. Additionally, editors most often choose images of white people over images that represent the actual diversity of Australia.

🗨️ More diverse views, diverse faces and diverse stories.

🗨️ Ensure recruitment has a focus on not just hiring but retaining culturally diverse staff.



03.

The media landscape



m.

Threats to public interest journalism

Survey respondents were asked to identify factors that they think threatened public interest journalism in 2022. The top factors identified were an increase in disinformation/‘fake news’ and lack of resources and staff, identified as a threat by 71% and 69% of respondents respectively. Only 2% of journalists responded that they did not feel there had been any threats to public interest journalism in 2022.

In Medianet’s 2020 study [COVID-19’s Impact on Journalists and the Media in Australia](#), journalists were asked to respond to a similar question about the biggest threats to public interest journalism that was heightened by the pandemic. The closure of media companies/newsrooms was highlighted as the biggest threat according to 66% of respondents.

Of the 10% who cited ‘other’ threats in 2022, many noted the effect of Australian defamation law on public interest journalism, including criminal action against whistleblowers. Some also mentioned bias or “propaganda” by other media outlets.

Given the opportunity to elaborate, many journalists spoke about the impact of decreasing budgets and resources due to various reasons.

Respondents noted the impacts of online and social media on public interest journalism, for example the impacts of algorithms on media publications, the pressure to create ‘clickbait’ journalism and the monetary impact of changing advertising models on the resources and funding of media, and the dissemination of ‘fake news’.

There were comments about both the issue of disinformation, as well as the impact of having the public or other media outlets accuse ‘factual’ or accurate reporting as ‘fake news’.

🗨️ We simply don’t have the resources to conduct the necessary local investigations. By resources, I specifically mean people.

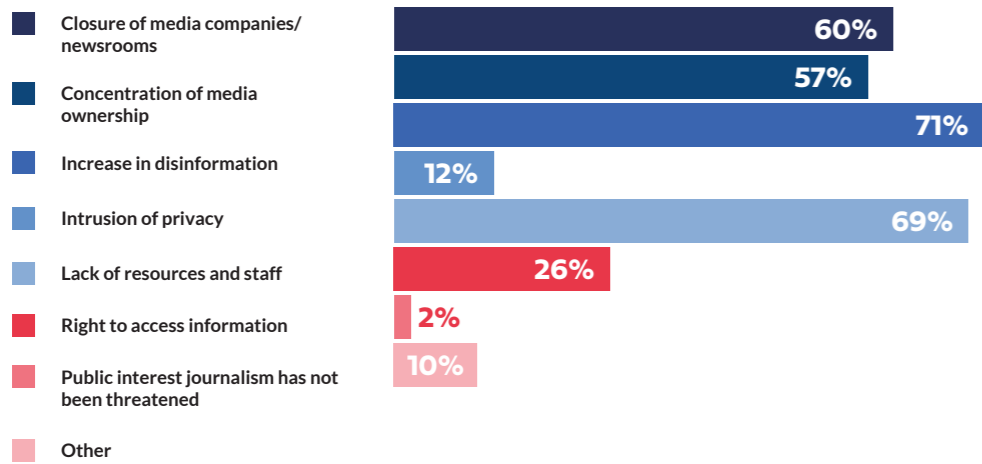


FIGURE 59: Biggest threats to public interest journalism

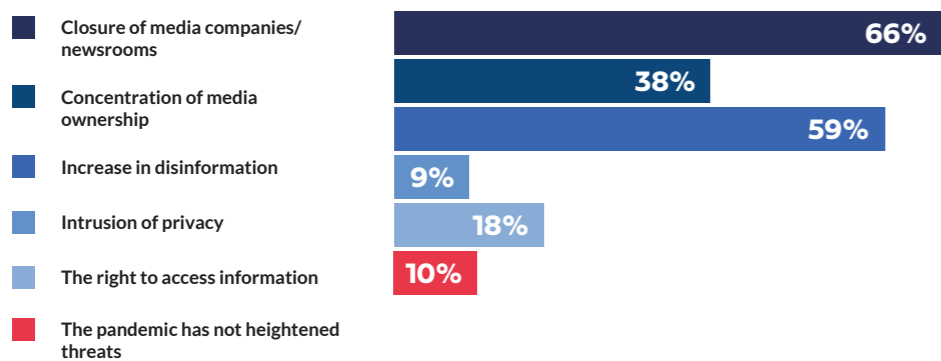


FIGURE 60: Biggest threats to public interest journalism heightened by the pandemic (2020 survey)

The competition created by social media and click bait means the pressure to be first can come at the expense of accuracy.

[The issue is] disproportionate space and platforms given to extremists, 'both sides' reporting, and a complete editorial failure to actually research and investigate stories.

People not trusting journalism outlets, not understanding how much you have to do with increasingly fewer resources and ever-increasing demands, the scrutiny you're under from within and outside the industry but fewer staff to vet your work before it goes to air.

Social media is killing journalism, and we give it power by using posts as part of our stories. It has shifted people to free news rather than paid news.

Defamation laws and the media

Half of journalists (49%) said they had withheld from publishing information that they knew to be true because of fear of defamation. This represented 57% of all journalists who said publishing stories was relevant to their work.

Journalists reporting on religion, politics, courts/crimes and Indigenous affairs reported the highest rates of having withheld truthful information at some point in their career due to concerns about defamation laws.

Journalists working in Western Australia, Tasmania and the ACT reported the highest rates of having held off on publishing information that they knew to be true because of fear of defamation. Journalists working in the ACT also reported the highest rates of responding that they believe defamation laws in Australia are too strict (62% of ACT respondents).

Forty-one percent of journalists also responded that they believed, in relation to their work, that defamation laws in Australia are too strict, with 33% saying they have no opinion, 22% responding that the law is 'just right' and 4% saying that defamation laws are too lenient.

Respondents commented on how defamation laws can make it difficult to hold powerful people and institutions accountable, a fundamental role of journalism, and also investigate issues of sexual abuse. Many said editors, publishers or lawyers at their media organisations were highly conservative/risk averse when it came to publishing potentially defamatory information due to the financial risks it would put the company in if taken to court.

Some pointed out the challenge of being legally responsible as a media organisation for social media comments left on articles or other news content.

Others raised how defamation laws play an important role in holding journalists accountable to the public for the information they share and protecting private citizens.

41%

Forty-one percent of journalists also responded that they believed, in relation to their work, that defamation laws in Australia are too strict.

No Opinion

33%

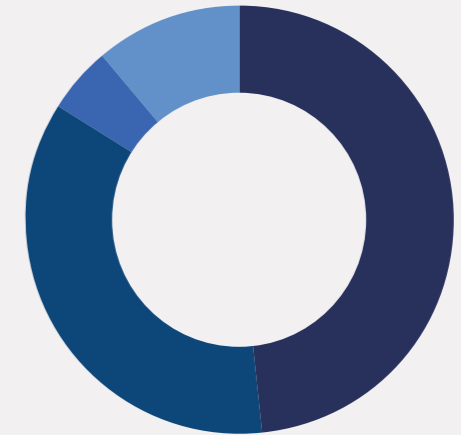
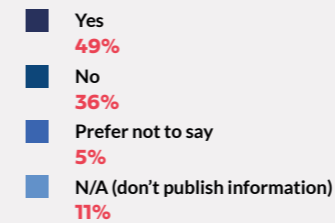
The law is just right

22%

The law is too lenient

4%

FIGURE 61: Withholding information because of fear of defamation



Working for a small organisation my biggest fear is a wealthy person suing us for defamation and litigating us out of business with court costs.

You can get money out of a news company, not the trolls who are making the [social media] comments. Our newspaper has got to the point where we just do not allow comments at all.

Especially when it comes to reporting on issues of racism, the experiences I've had in regards to defamation law are truly horrifying. I've been told that organisations cannot be called racist even if they are structurally – you can only report on instances of racism.

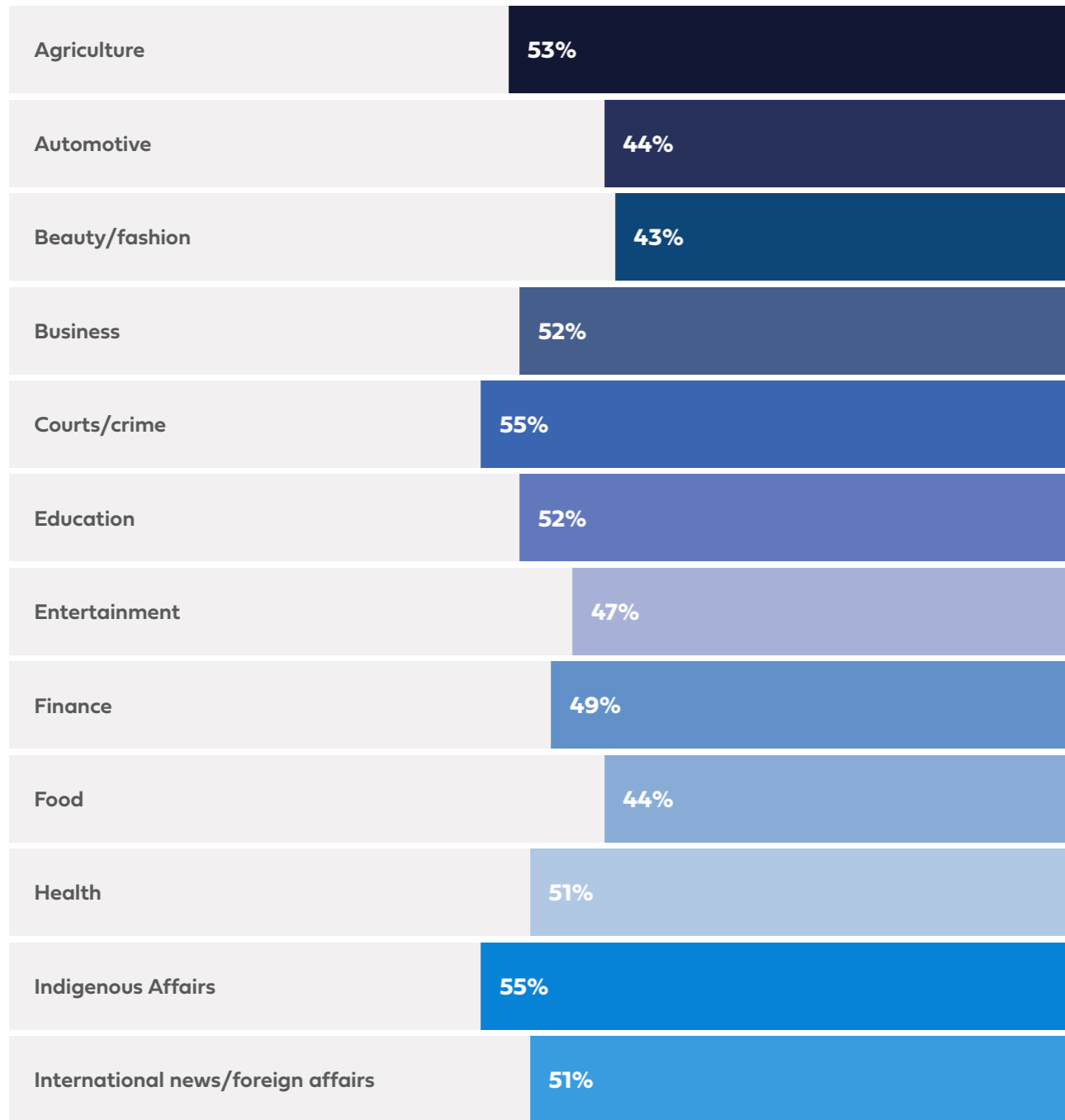


FIGURE 62: Withholding information because of fear of defamation, by journalists topic area

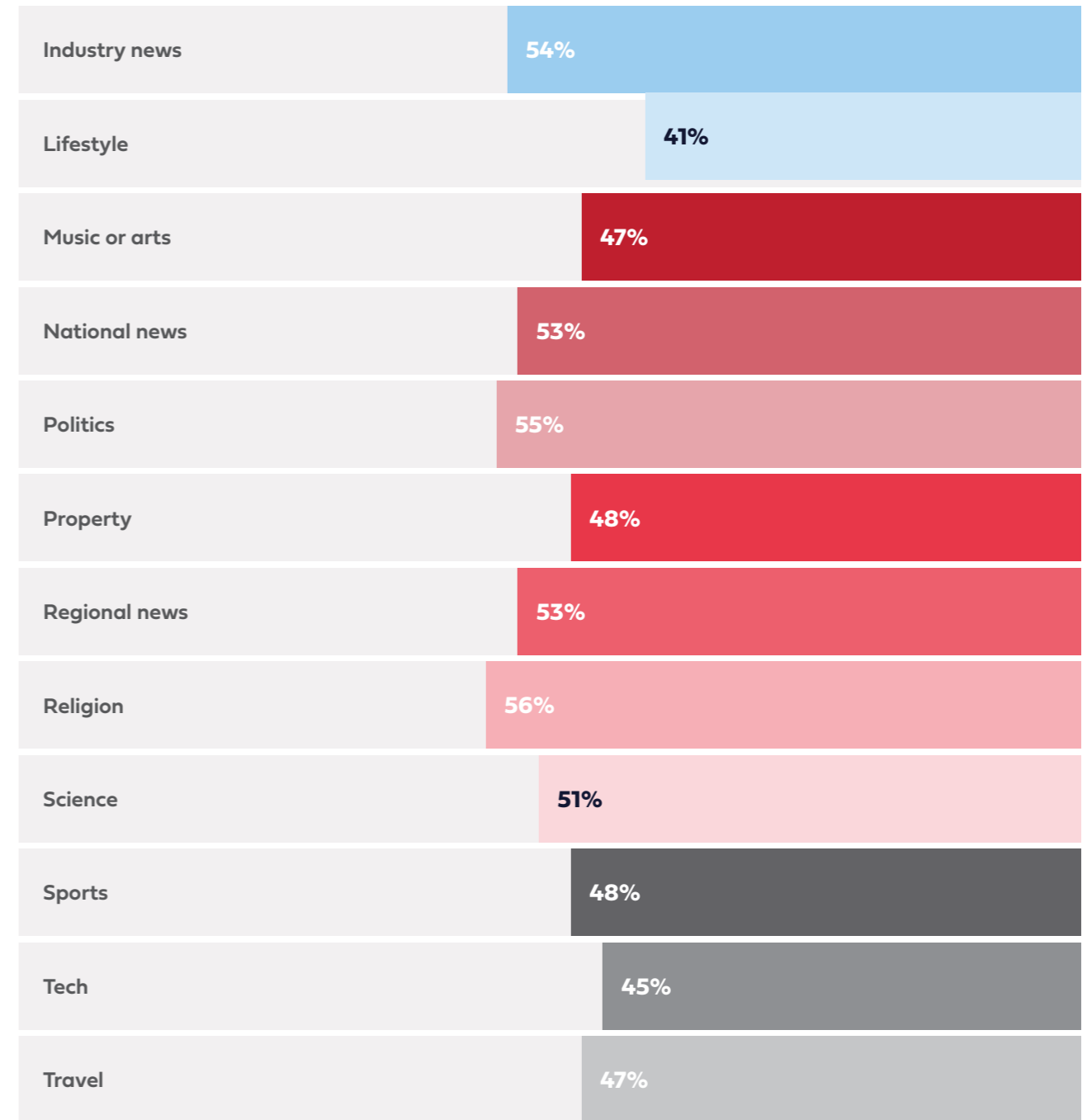


FIGURE 62 continued

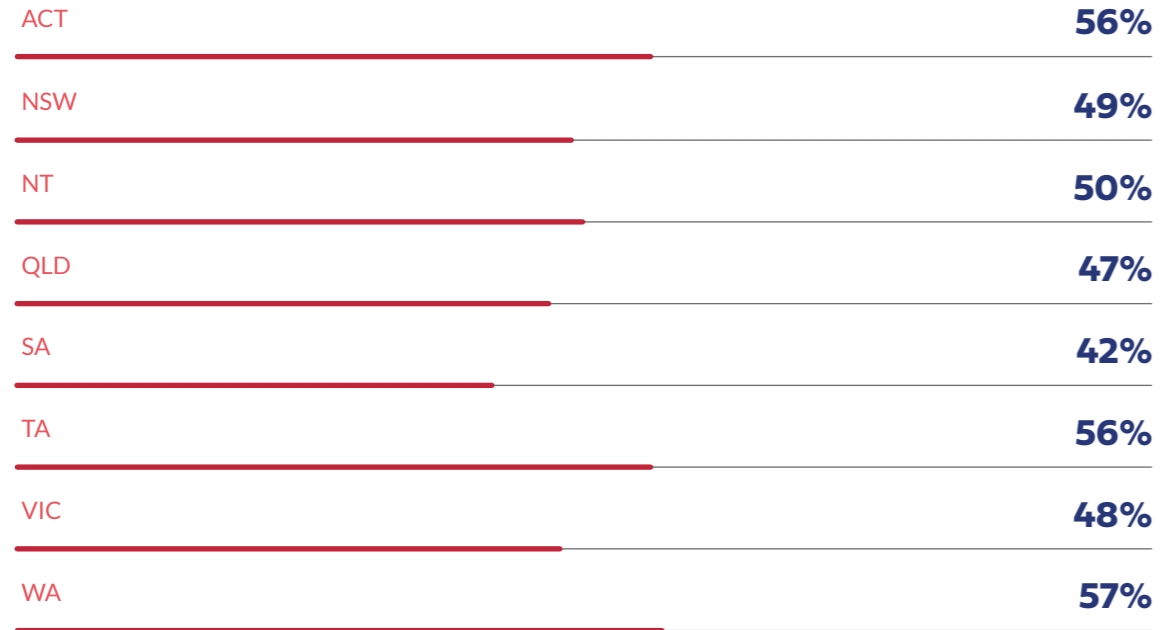
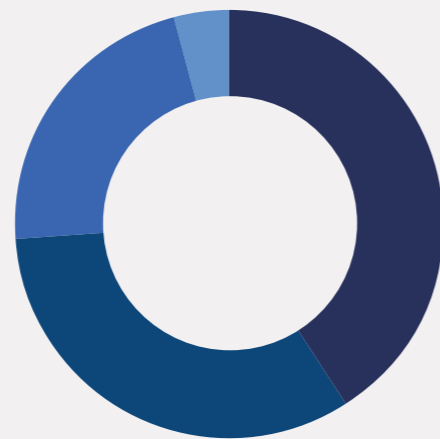


FIGURE 63: Withholding information because of fear of defamation, by journalists' location

Please note: Some states were represented in this survey by only a low number of respondents (see Figure 3), so results may be skewed by this small sample size.

FIGURE 64: Views about defamation laws in Australia

- Too strict 41%
- No opinion 33%
- Just right 22%
- Too lenient 4%



I certainly would not like to see us travel too far down the American example which is so open to hate speech and racism masquerading as freedom of speech.

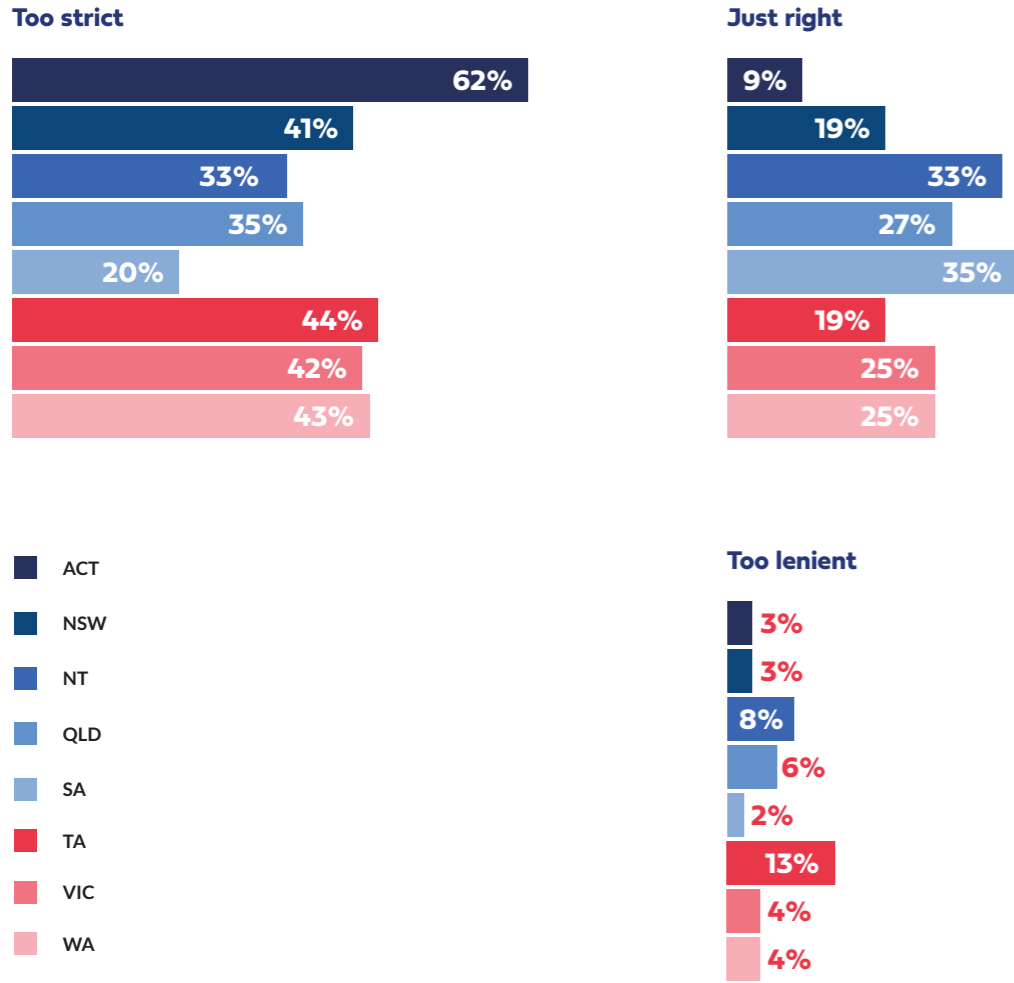
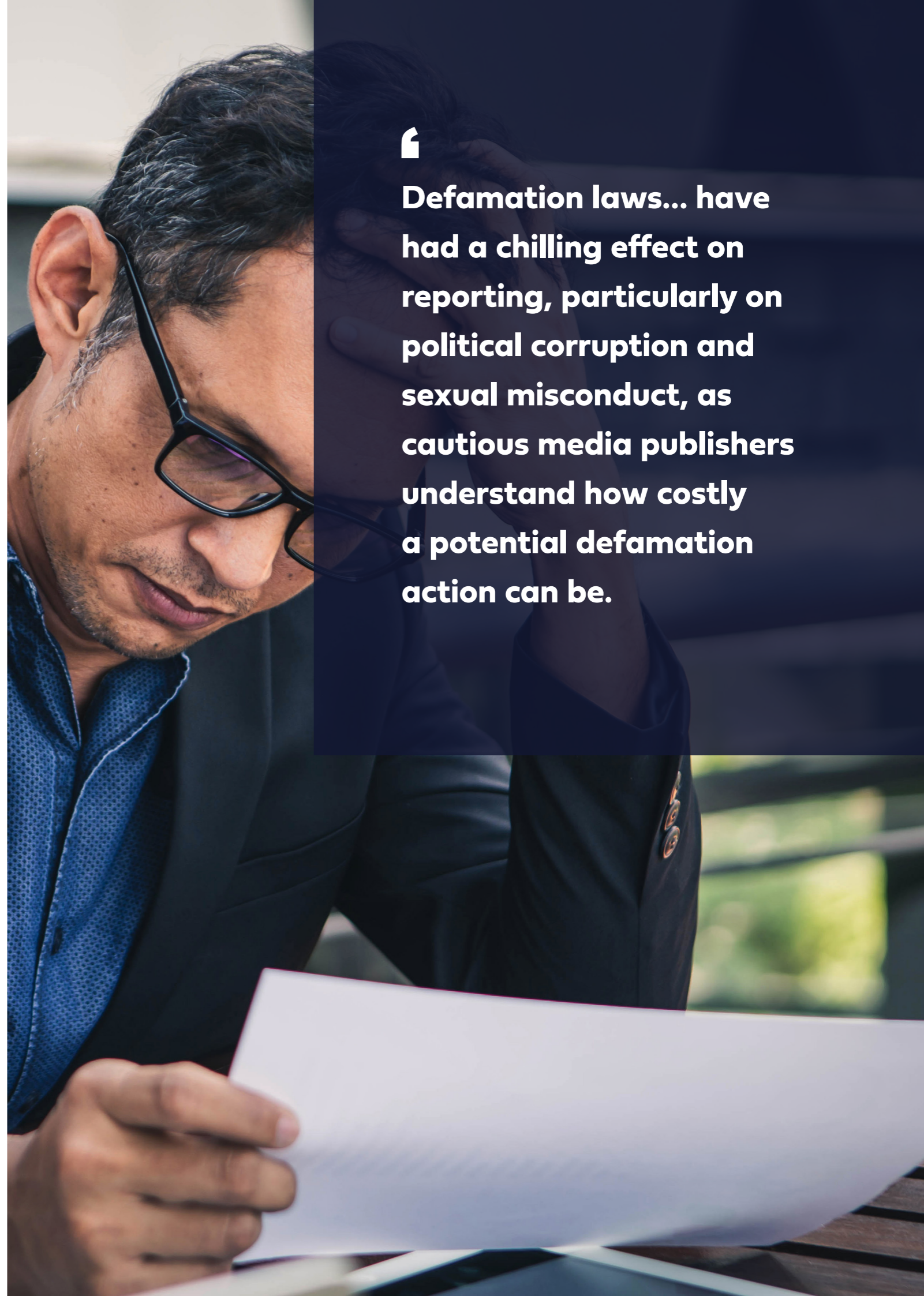


FIGURE 65: Views about defamation laws in Australia, by journalists' location

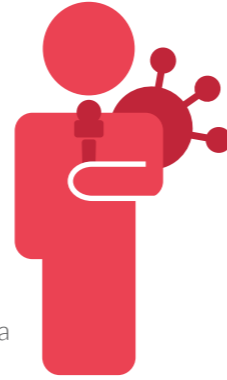
As an editor I must be on constant guard to avoid affecting the lives of others by publishing untrue or exaggerated content. It is to avoid defamation action and to be fair to all.

Defamation laws... have had a chilling effect on reporting, particularly on political corruption and sexual misconduct, as cautious media publishers understand how costly a potential defamation action can be.



Editorial control or direction

28%



of respondents said they had been asked to take a certain editorial stance based on the affiliations or beliefs of the media organisation where they currently work or freelance for.

Just over a quarter of all respondents (28%) said they had been asked to take a certain editorial stance based on the affiliations or beliefs of the media organisation where they currently work or freelance for. Journalists working for commercial media organisations reported higher rates of having experienced this, as did TV and digital journalists.

A higher proportion of women reported having been asked to take an editorial position based on the affiliations or beliefs of their media organisation, compared to men and non-binary respondents.

Journalists under 50 years old reported higher rates of having been asked to take an editorial stance compared to older respondents.

Journalists working regionally experienced lower rates of having been asked to take a certain editorial stance based on the affiliations or beliefs of their media organisation, compared to metro or suburban journalists.

Many respondents noted the influence advertisers or appealing to potential advertisers can have editorially on a media organisation.

Some also raised that they had had stories “pulled” (cancelled) or been advised not to pitch certain stories due to the editorial stance of their organisation.

Others raised that they or their organisation follow strong editorial guidelines and ethical principles that either prevent this from occurring, or ensure that certain editorial stances are upheld.

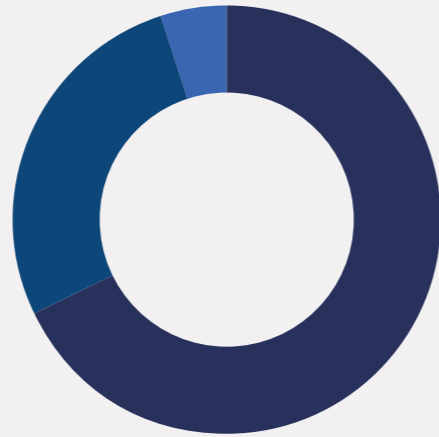
I’ve never been told what to write. But certain pitches won’t get up in the first place if they don’t think it suits the paper.

We have non-negotiable moral stances where I work. For example we don’t publish anything that is anti-gay, anti-abortion or anti-women’s rights.

At a regional daily I was given a list of preferred local businesses / industry spokespeople for quotes. I believe the majority of these were advertisers.

FIGURE 66: Journalists' asked to take an editorial stance

- No 68%
- Yes 27%
- Prefer not to say 5%



In nearly 30 years management has never once even suggested a certain line of thinking.

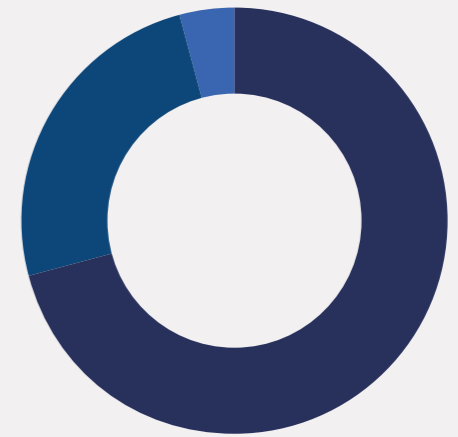
In my role, I am encouraged to be balanced and fair in all of my reporting.

We don't run bad stories on any current or potential clients.

FIGURE 67: Journalists' asked to take an editorial stance, by media organisation type

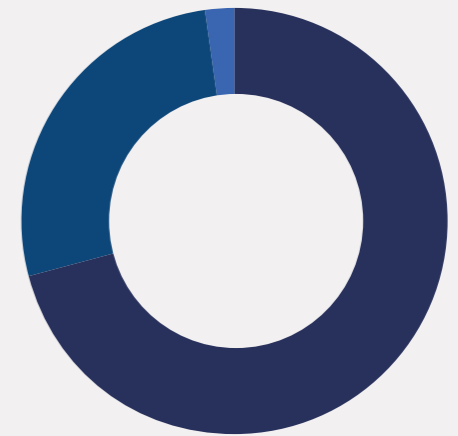
Independent

- No 71%
- Yes 25%
- Prefer not to say 4%



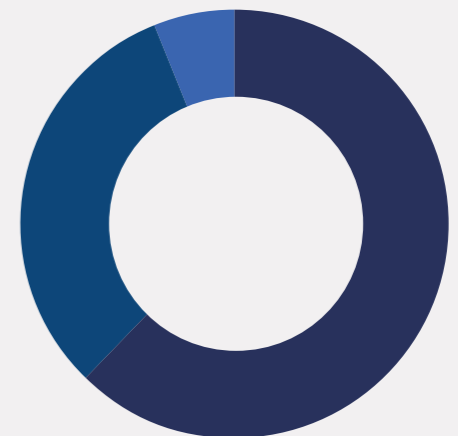
Government/publicly funded

- No 71%
- Yes 27%
- Prefer not to say 2%

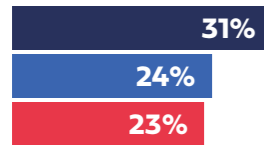


Commercial

- No 63%
- Yes 32%
- Prefer not to say 6%



Yes



No



- Female
- Male
- Non-binary

FIGURE 68: Journalists' who have been asked to take an editorial stance, by gender

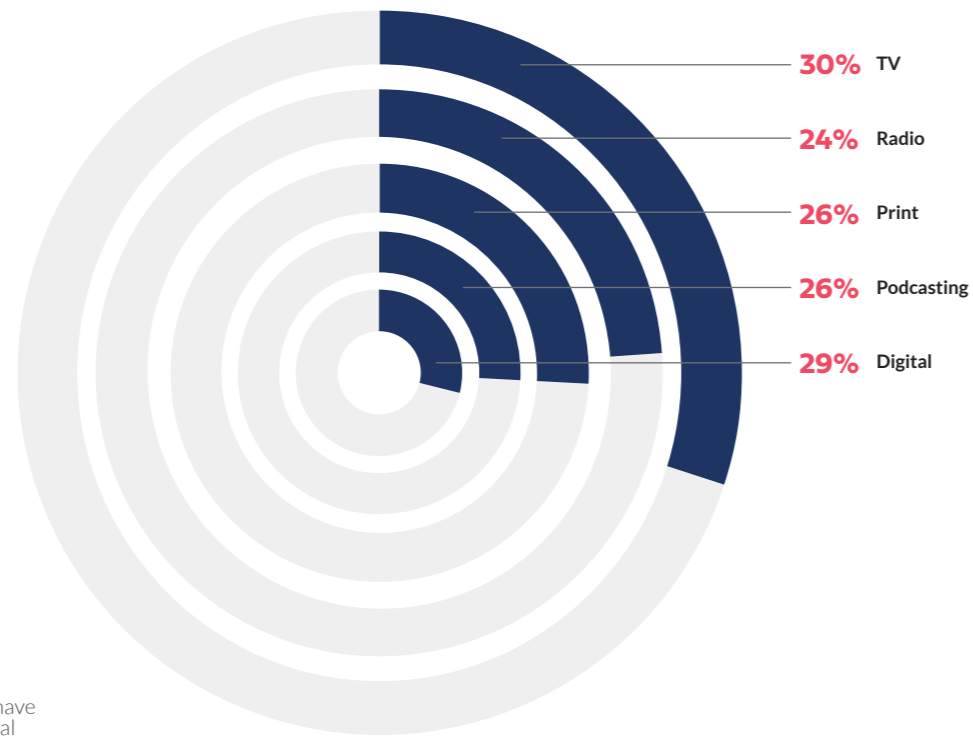


FIGURE 69: Journalists' who have been asked to take an editorial stance, by media type

I am the owner of the publication so no-one asks me to take a certain editorial stance but I am reasonably confident the publication has lost or not gained some advertising because of the editorial stance I take, which is to put the public interest first.



FIGURE 70: Journalists' who have been asked to take an editorial stance, by age

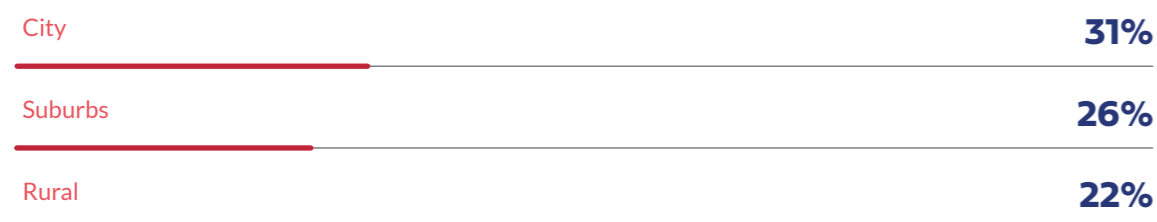


FIGURE 71: Journalists' who have been asked to take an editorial stance, by location

📌 We would be advised against pitching stories that were too left-leaning or 'Indigenous' because they wouldn't be published.

Reporting on federal politics

Given 2022 was a federal election year, survey respondents were asked whether reporting on federal politics was any different under the new government. Of the 472 journalists who said they report on federal politics (46% of all respondents), 32% reported that the new government was more transparent, and 5% said it was less transparent. Half (52%) said that the experience of reporting had not changed under the new government.

Of the 4% of journalists who responded 'other' to this question, many said it was too early to tell the difference.

Throughout the survey, journalists were given several opportunities to elaborate on their responses. One theme that emerged across many of these responses was a strong political divide between journalists, often making bold accusations about the biases and harm caused by other media organisations which are known to be politically aligned on one side or the other. Many respondents accused journalists on both ends of the political spectrum of spreading misinformation or perpetuating a harmful agenda.

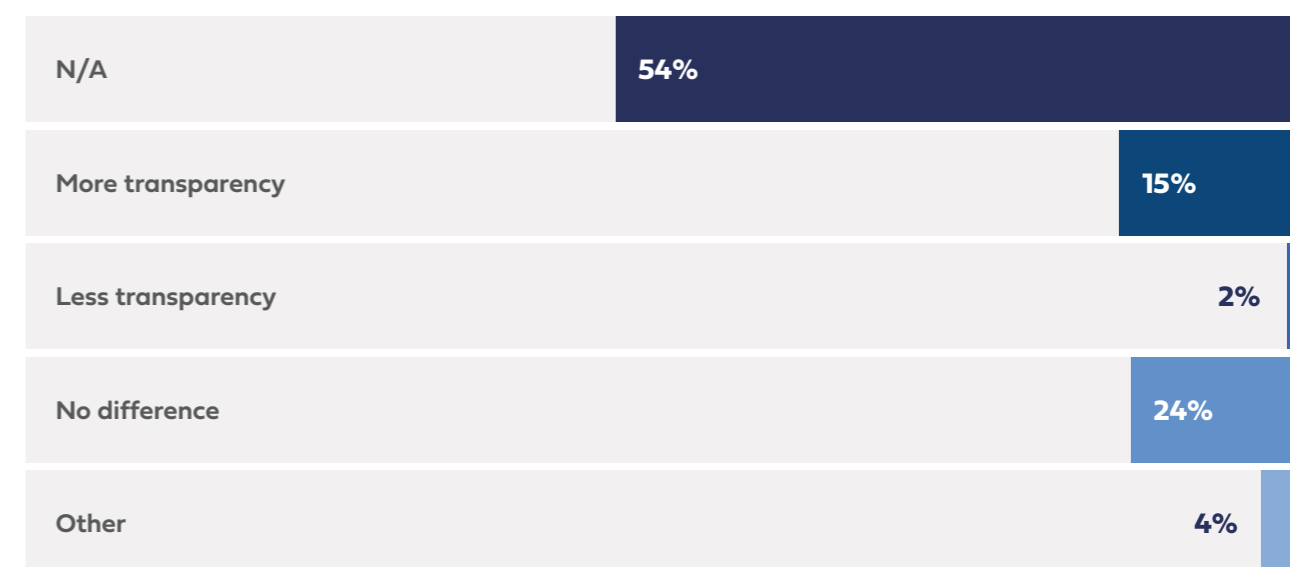


FIGURE 72: Difference in reporting on federal politics under new government

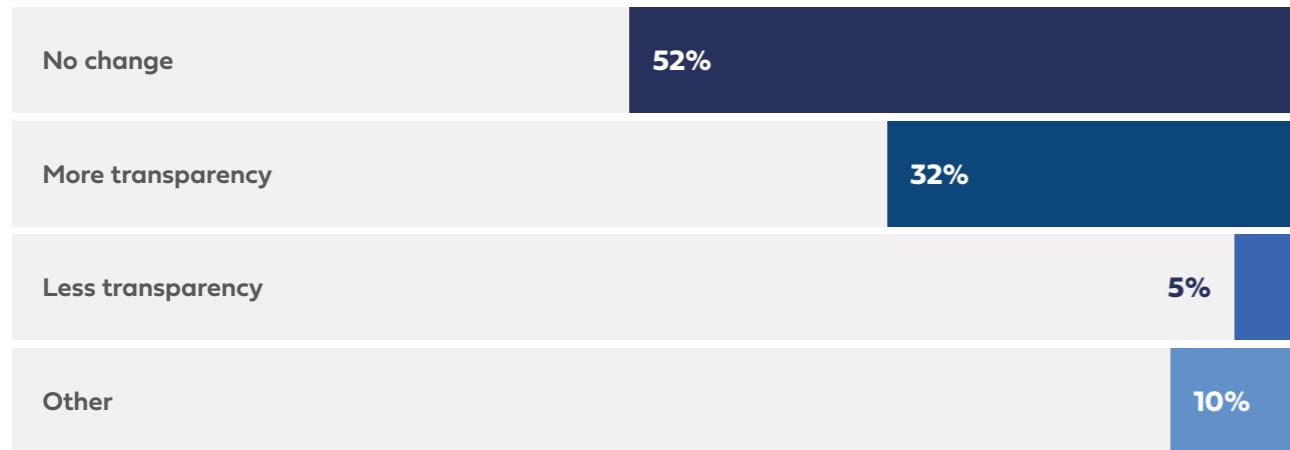


FIGURE 73: Difference in reporting on federal politics under new government (those who report on federal politics)

🗨️ **The political bias in some media organisations is shocking. It might serve their masters/owners but it is a disservice to the nation.**

🗨️ Government [is] more transparent but media coverage [is] also more sympathetic.

🗨️ They need to reform FOI [freedom of information] if they are serious about accountability.

🗨️ Early days still, but the new government is not as hostile towards the media.

🗨️ We have better access to ministers and information now, it's such a breath of fresh air.



It's easy for new governments to seem open and transparent. We need to see how they deal with their own failures to judge if they will actually deliver in this area.

🗨️ The media is politically biased. It supports the extreme woke left, and public figures fear the media on this.

🗨️ PMO under the coalition was very active with sending out information. Media lists appear not to have been shared with Labor. For me at least there is an information void.

Audience engagement: Good news or bad news

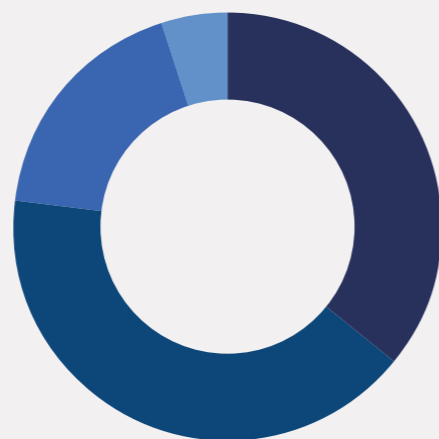
Journalists were asked whether they thought good news or bad news generated more audience engagement. Forty-two percent responded that it depends, 36% said bad news generates more engagement and 18% said good news.

Of those who responded 'other', many said they thought balanced, quality, relevant and informed journalism generates the most audience engagement, regardless of whether this was about good or bad news. On the other hand, many journalists said more trivial, fun or entertaining, or misleading, 'clickbait' or sensationalised news generates the most engagement.

For us, engagement means community involvement and participation in local democratic processes.

FIGURE 74: Journalists' views on content generating most audience engagement

- Bad news 36%
- Depends 41%
- Good news 18%
- Other 5%



As a hard news journalist I am amazed at the popularity of writing about food and lifestyle. My go to example is an interview I did last year with Julian Assange's father John Shipton. The same morning a story on a new sourdough shop in our city received 1000 times the number of readers. It was painful.

Meaningful, smart, insightful journalism.

Short, dumbed down, provocative.

Media control over the news agenda: Proactive or reactive

Journalists were asked whether, in general, they believe the media shape the news agenda or respond to it. Fifty-eight percent responded 'both', while 28% said the media shape the news agenda and 14% said the media just respond to what's happening.

Many respondents pointed out that the audience also controls the news agenda due to the media's need to prioritise viewership numbers, subscribers and 'clicks'.

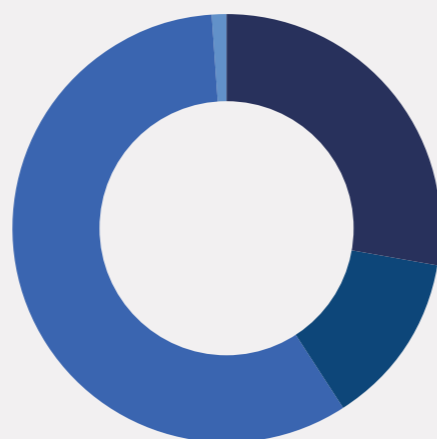
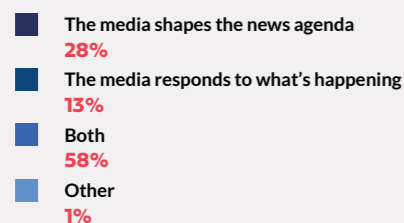
In general, respondents also suggested that the media should aim for some sort of combination of reactive and proactive coverage. Investigative reporting was highlighted as a positive form of shaping the news agenda, while "agenda-setting" was looked down on overall. Similarly, respondents highlighted the importance of being reactive in covering newsworthy events while not allowing social media trends to determine the news agenda.

The audience shapes the news agenda.

Sadly a lot of media outlets seem to have to play catch up due to the speed, intensity and proliferation of trending, social media-based 'news'.

Media now is dependent on press releases as there is not enough time or resources to hunt independently for stories.

FIGURE 75: Journalists' views on media control over news agenda.



The media is a reflection. We write more crime because it's what people click. If people read the good news/important news more often, we'd be pushed to do more of that, and less of the other.

The media is both reactive and proactive; reactive when things are happening in the community we serve and pro-active in bringing issues to light.

The media need to take more responsibility for how they frame stories.

04.

Journalist sources and social media



Story sources

Industry and professional contacts remain the top story source for journalists (used by 90% of respondents).

Press releases are the second most used story source, used by 86% of journalists. Compared to previous years, there has been a 4% increase in respondents who use press releases as a story source. There has also been significant increases in the percentage of journalists using the general public, PR agencies and publicists, other news media, social media, journals or peer reviewed articles and official documents to source stories.

General public



Industry and professional contacts



Other news media



PR agencies/publicists



Press releases



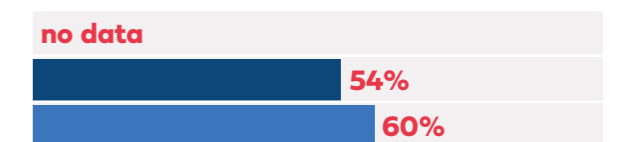
Social media



Official documents e.g. government docs



Journals/peer-reviewed articles



Search engines e.g. Google

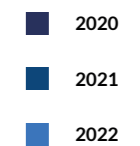


FIGURE 76: Story sources used by journalists (year)

Press releases

87%

of respondents, of the 868 survey respondents who use press releases to source their stories, said their PR contacts email them directly with press releases.



Of the 868 survey respondents (86%) who use press releases to source stories, the majority (87%) said their PR contacts email them directly with press releases.

Two thirds (67%) said they receive emails or pitches from a press release distribution service, while 32% receive press releases from their editor or chief-of-staff and 30% find them online on a press release platform.

When receiving a press release, only 11% of journalists said they read the whole thing before deciding if the story is worth pursuing.

The majority of respondents (70%) read less than a paragraph, with 37% opening the email and glancing at it, 23% reading the first paragraph and 10% reading just the email subject line. Twenty percent read more than one paragraph but not the whole release.

- 2020
- 2021
- 2022



FIGURE 77: Journalists' use of press releases to source stories (year)

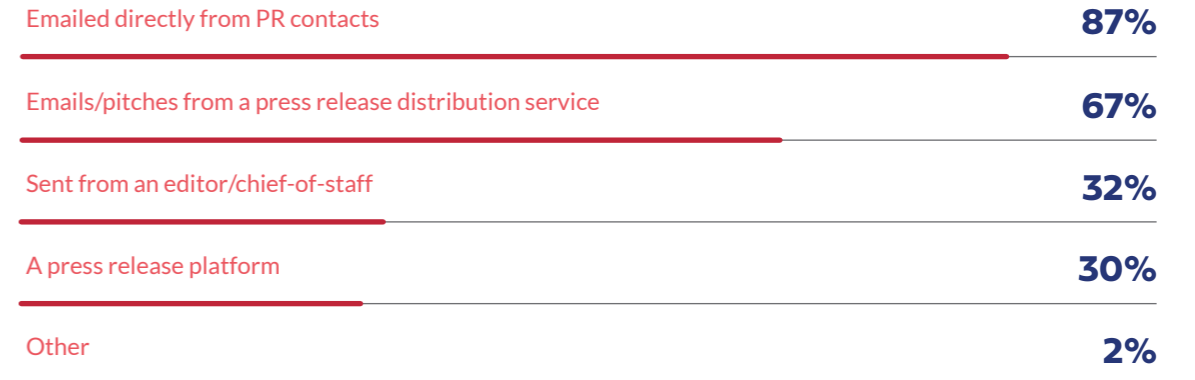
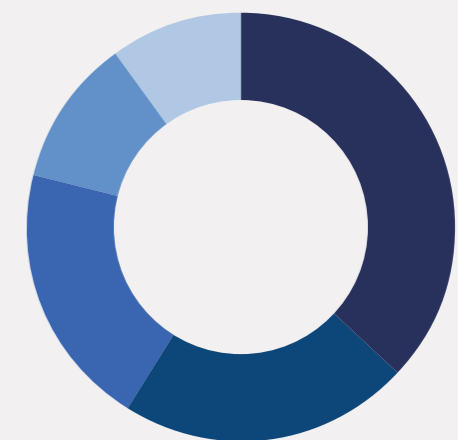


FIGURE 78: Where journalists find press releases

Media now is dependent on press releases as there is not enough time or resources to hunt independently for stories.

FIGURE 79: How much journalists read of a press release

- Open the email and glance at it 37%
- Read the first paragraph 22%
- Read more than one paragraph 20%
- Read the whole thing 11%
- Read just the email subject line 10%



Embargoes

Almost half of journalist respondents (48%) said they generally like to receive embargoed releases a few days in advance. One day is the preferred notice period for 24% of journalists, one week for 15% and more than one week for 8%.

A few days was the preferred notice period for surveyed PR professionals setting an embargo on a release.

Twenty-two percent of PR professionals said they prefer not to send embargoed releases, while only 5% of journalists responded that they prefer not to receive embargoed releases.

These preferences did not differ significantly depending on the journalists' platform (print vs radio etc.).

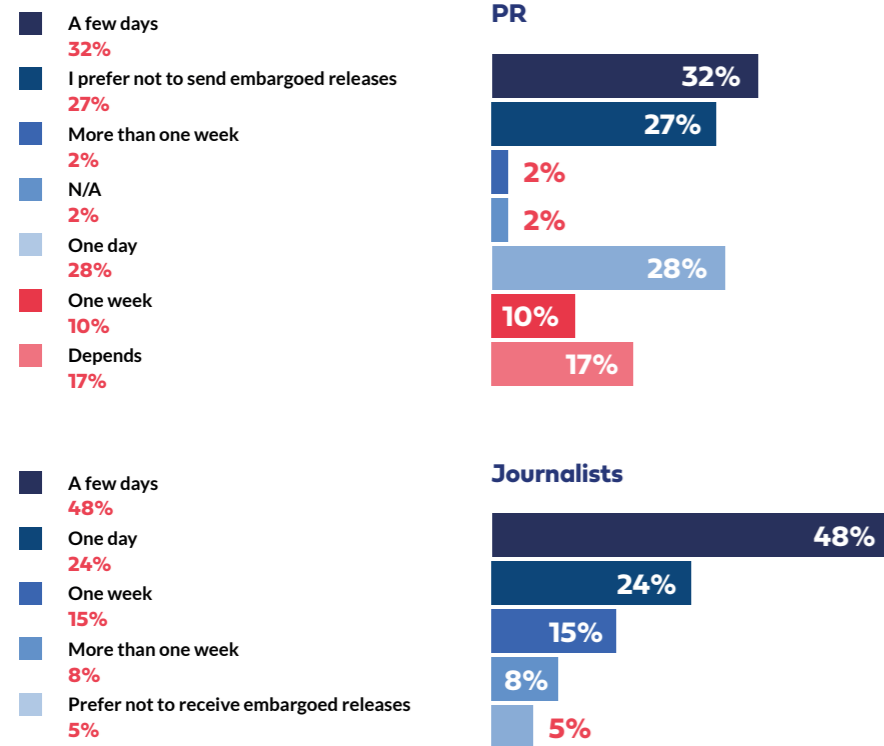
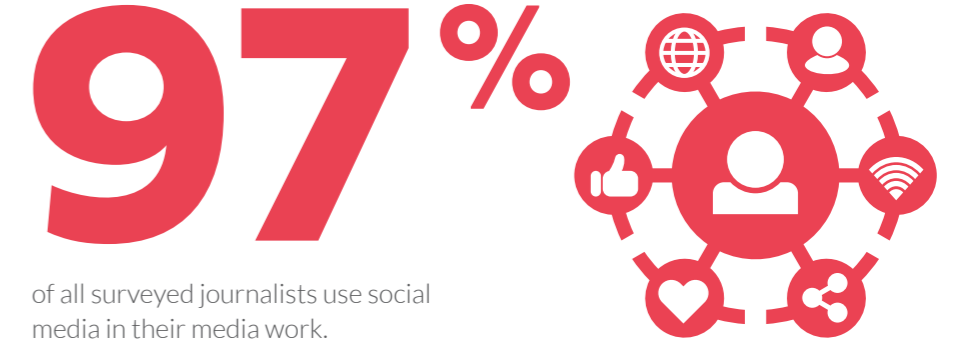


FIGURE 80: Preferred advanced notice time for embargoed releases

Social media



of all surveyed journalists use social media in their media work.

Almost all surveyed journalists (97%) use social media in their media work, with 76% using it specifically to source stories. Facebook remains the most used social media/communication platform for journalists professionally, followed by Twitter, Instagram then LinkedIn.

Journalists' professional use of LinkedIn has been increasing for the past three years, and Instagram and Facebook also both saw a slight increase in usage since the 2021 survey. Professional use of Reddit and TikTok saw the most significant increase compared to 2021.

The most used social media site for surveyed PR professionally was LinkedIn, used by 87% of PR survey respondents. This was followed by Facebook (79%), Instagram (72%) and Twitter (62%).

A far higher percentage of PR professionals are using LinkedIn in their work than journalists (62% of journalist respondents), while more journalists are using Twitter compared to PR.



Journalists' professional use of LinkedIn has been increasing for the past three years, and Instagram and Facebook also both saw a slight increase in usage since the 2021 survey. Professional use of Reddit and TikTok saw the most significant increase compared to 2021.

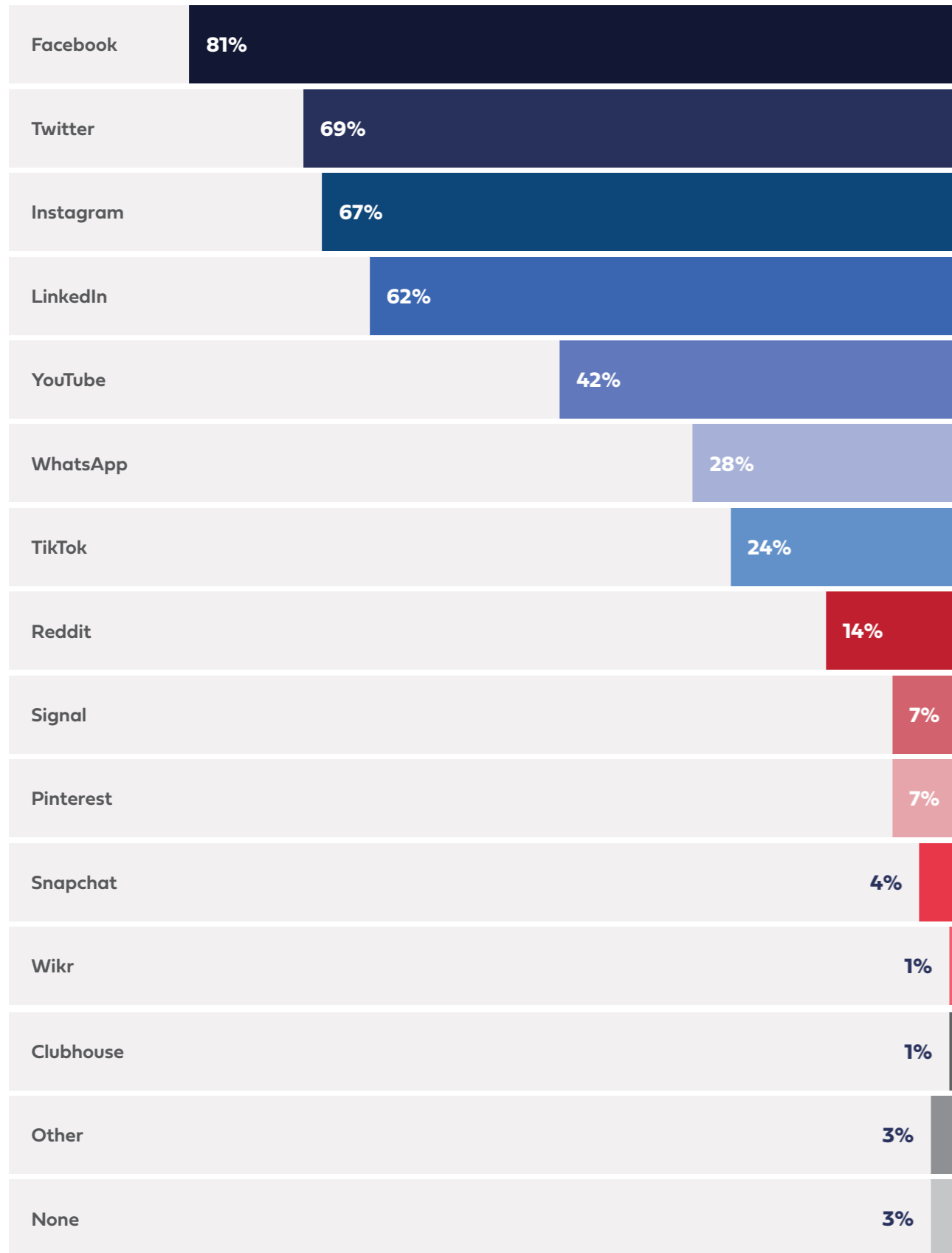


FIGURE 81: Professional social media usage by journalists in 2022

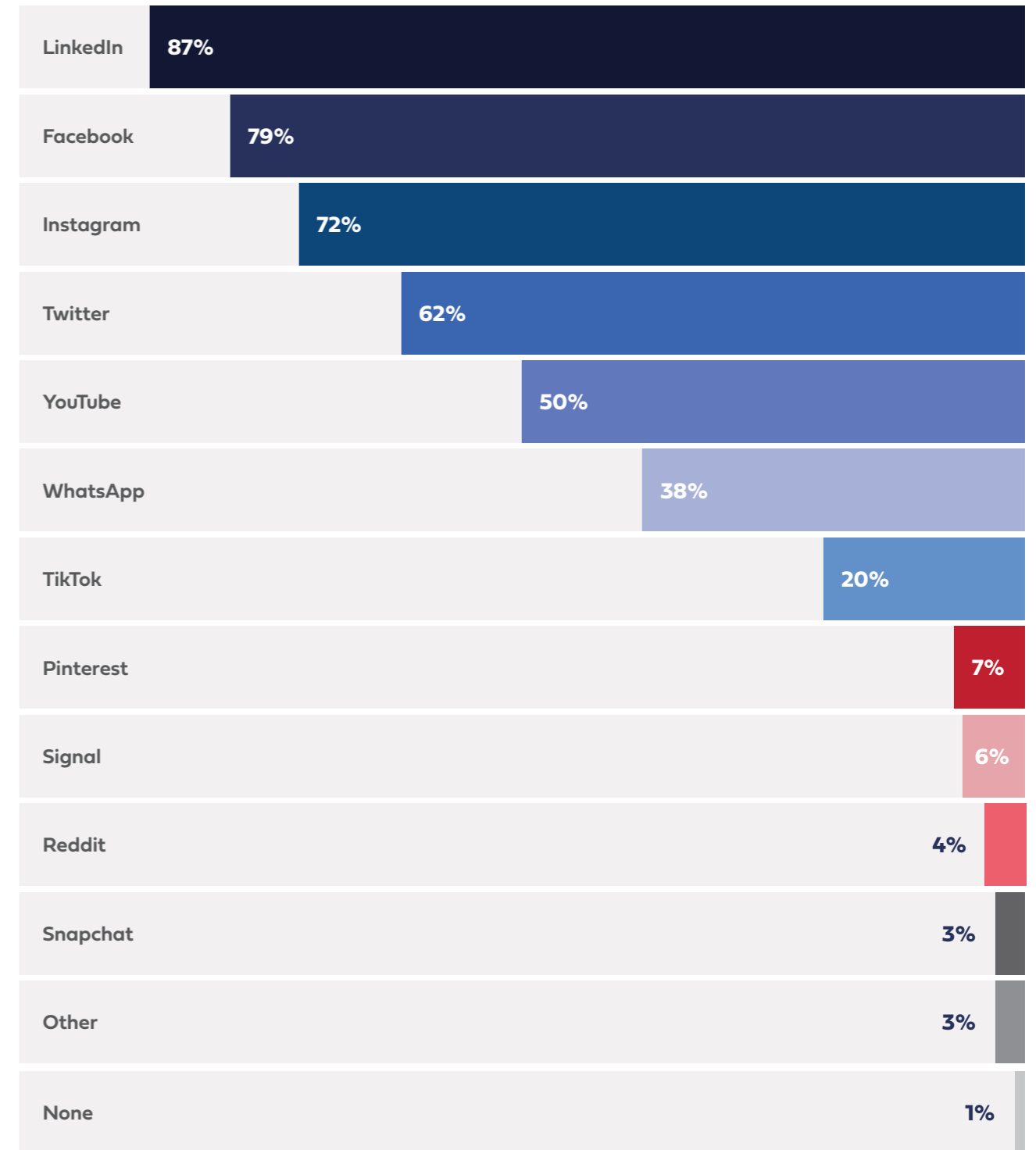


FIGURE 82: Professional social media usage by PR in 2022

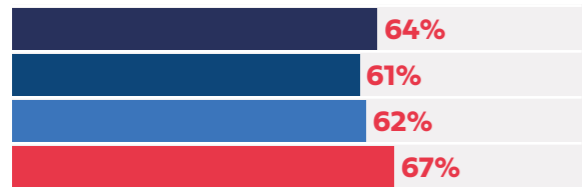
Facebook



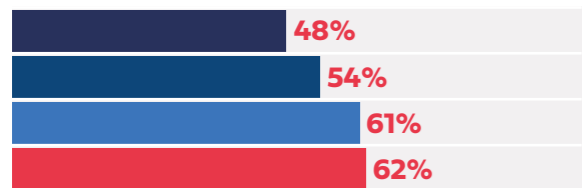
Twitter



Instagram

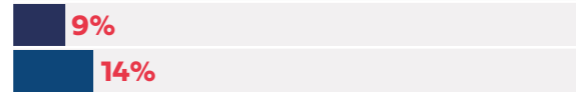


LinkedIn



- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022

FIGURE 83: Professional social media usage by journalists (year)



- 2021
- 2022

FIGURE 84: Journalists' professional use of Reddit



- 2021
- 2022

FIGURE 85: Journalists' professional use of TikTok

About Medianet

Medianet, a division of Mediality, is a PR platform and media intelligence business servicing both media and public relations professionals. For nearly 40 years, Medianet has been the bridge between organisations looking to tell their stories and journalists hungry for great stories to tell.

Medianet offers free tools and services to help journalists find stories and sources, tailor how they receive pitches and receive daily summaries of the most newsworthy stories straight into their inboxes.

Thanks to Medianet's unique position in the media landscape, PR professionals can use the Medianet platform to plan and execute a successful media relations strategy. Features include a Press Release builder, a selection of carefully curated media lists, a highly comprehensive database of media contacts, expansion with ad-driven distribution to any news site of choice and an in-house editor who pitches stories directly to Australian newsrooms on behalf of clients. Media analysis reports are also available to understand the impact of media coverage.

medianet.com.au

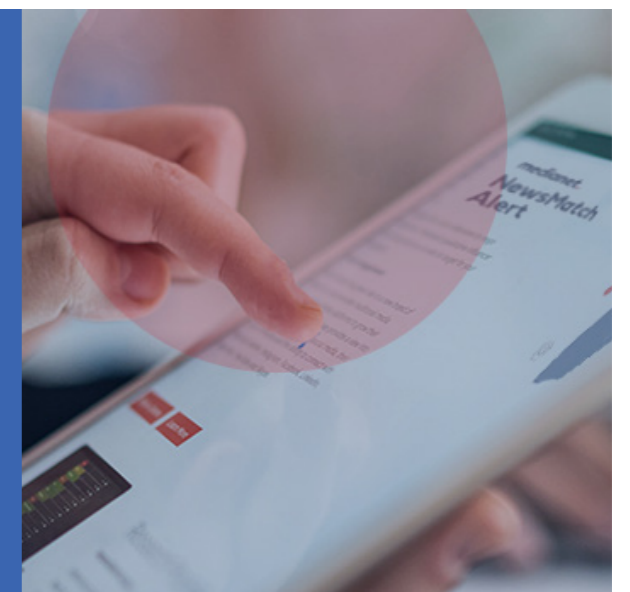


Medianet offers free tools and services to help journalists find stories and sources, tailor how they receive pitches and receive daily summaries of the most newsworthy stories straight into their inboxes.

NewsMatch

Receive daily summaries for the most newsworthy stories of the day.

[Sign up to NewsMatch](#)



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