



AUSTRALIAN NETWORK
ON DISABILITY

2017

Disability Confidence Survey Report

ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN NETWORK ON DISABILITY

The Australian Network on Disability (AND) is a national, membership based, for-purpose organisation, that makes it easier for organisations to provide an accessible and inclusive environment for people with disability in all aspects of business. This includes employment, customer service, stakeholder relations and supply of goods.

We are driven by our belief that people with disability are skilled and capable social and economic contributors, entitled to equitable opportunities in society.

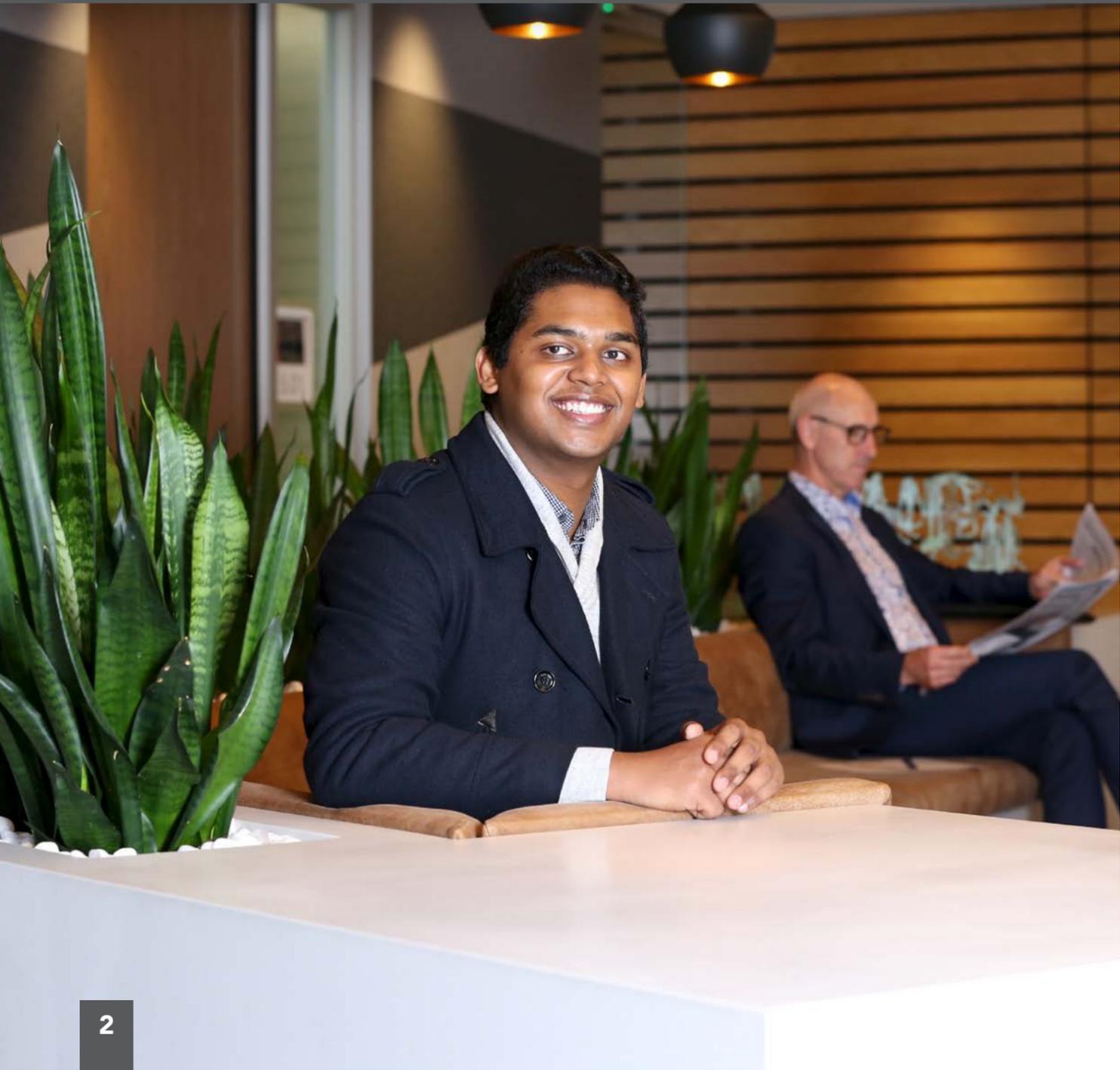


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A NOTE FROM **SUZANNE COLBERT AM**, FOUNDING CEO OF THE AUSTRALIAN NETWORK ON DISABILITY

"Customers are more empowered than ever, and competition is fierce. With 38% of families including a family member with disability - being accessible and inclusive makes good business sense and is the right thing to do. People with disability represent a substantial opportunity to businesses," said Suzanne Colbert, CEO, AND.



Suzanne Colbert
CEO Australian Network on Disability

The hope of the NDIS is for people with disability to live 'ordinary lives'. An ordinary life means doing what we want to do, going to the places we want to go – being a customer and having a job.

But what's the likelihood of people with disability living an ordinary life in their local community? As most businesses are small, our 2017 Disability Confidence Survey interviews more than 500 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to ask them about their attitudes and experiences of customers and employees with disability.

The results show that many businesses don't have a good understanding of customers with disability and some still hold outdated stereotypes about the skills and capabilities of people with disability as employees.

Despite customers being more empowered than ever, there has been no change in the ability of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to be accessible to and inclusive of people with disability in the last two years.

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) disability discrimination receives the highest level of complaints across the board. However, our survey finds that SMEs are simply not doing enough to progress their ability to be customer centric and inclusive.

The Report found that, six out of 10 SMEs have done nothing to make it easier for customers with disability to do business with them in the past 12 months, citing a lack of specific request as the main reason (50%).

It is a finding that is supported by the AHRC's 2017 report, Missing Out: The business case for customer diversity. Produced in partnership with Deloitte Australia the Missing Out report shows that one in three customers from diverse backgrounds, including people with disability, say their customer needs were often unmet over the past 12 months.

The situation is disappointing for customers with disability, but for jobseekers with disability it is even worse. While more than half of the businesses surveyed (58%) identify their attitude to employing skilled people with disability as positive, only three in ten Australian SMEs actually employ people with disability.

Survey participants rate the importance of employees with disability at only 6.0 on a scale of one to ten with one being not important and ten being extremely important. For customers with disability, the score was 6.7.

The report also indicates that there is a lack of understanding about what disability is. Many participants shared that they don't feel that disability is relevant for their work or situation. But disability is diverse, it doesn't discriminate, and it can happen to anyone. Employers cannot know with any certainty that disability is not relevant for their work or situation.

This is reflected in Simon Darcy, Tracy Taylor and Jenny Green's report 'But I can do the job': examining disability employment practice through human rights complaint cases (December 2016), which found that employers incorrectly assumed that the costs of employing people with disability were higher than they are, or were unaware of government programs to offset the costs of reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

At AND, we work in partnership with more than 200 large employers who are making it easier for people with disability to do business with them.

SMEs, as Australia's largest business segment, also need further guidance to welcome customers and employees with disability.

The economic model of the NDIS is predicated on increased employment outcomes for people with disability. There needs to be significantly more investment if we are to achieve change.

AND's Access and Inclusion Quick Self-Assessment is a simple way to measure current performance.

Publications such as AND's Welcoming Customers with Disability (\$10) outline how to improve accessibility and inclusion for people with disability.

Call AND on 1300 363 645 or visit the AND website, www.and.org.au to discover the many tools available.

ABOUT THE DISABILITY CONFIDENCE SURVEY

Supported by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), Westpac Group, IBM and the Department of Defence, the Disability Confidence Survey is a measure of awareness and attitudes of small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to people with disability.

The study seeks to understand the current landscape for Australian businesses, generate awareness and start a conversation about access and inclusion for people with disability by:

- Assessing attitudes towards access and inclusion of people with disability.
- Investigating what businesses are doing to address access and inclusion of people with disability.
- Uncovering new activities planned in these organisations for the next 12 months.

- Identifying discrepancies between perceptions of accessibility and inclusion and the real experiences of people with disability.
- Encouraging SMEs to seek additional information resources and training to support their access and inclusion initiatives.

The research was undertaken by Antenna Strategic Insights, with 2016 and 2017 waves weighted to business size using the ABS 'Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, Jun 2012 to Jun 2016'. The research was based on a survey of 533 SMEs employing between 5 and 250 employees, across a range of industries in all states and territories. The survey spoke to both managers and staff.



KEY FINDINGS

CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITY



of our participants believe their customer base includes people with disability. This shows no change from 2016.



More than half of these see customers with disability as being important to their business: **"All customers are important.... everyone should be treated the same."**



of our participants have not done anything in the past 12 months to make it easier for people with disability to do business with them. For almost half of these, there is a perception of not being asked to: **"We have received no specific requests."**



Less than one quarter of our participants plan to do something in the next 12 months for their customer with disability. Physical access to premises, support and technology are the key areas of focus.

EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITY



of our participants see the inclusion of job applicants with disability as important to their business. This is 16% less than when it comes to their customers. Worryingly, many businesses see job applicants with disability as **"not appropriate for our work."**



of our respondents work in businesses that currently employ people with disability, while 48% don't and a further 22% are unsure.



of those that do employ people with disability have experienced clear benefits including strengthening workplace morale, improved skills set, greater customer satisfaction and improved productivity.



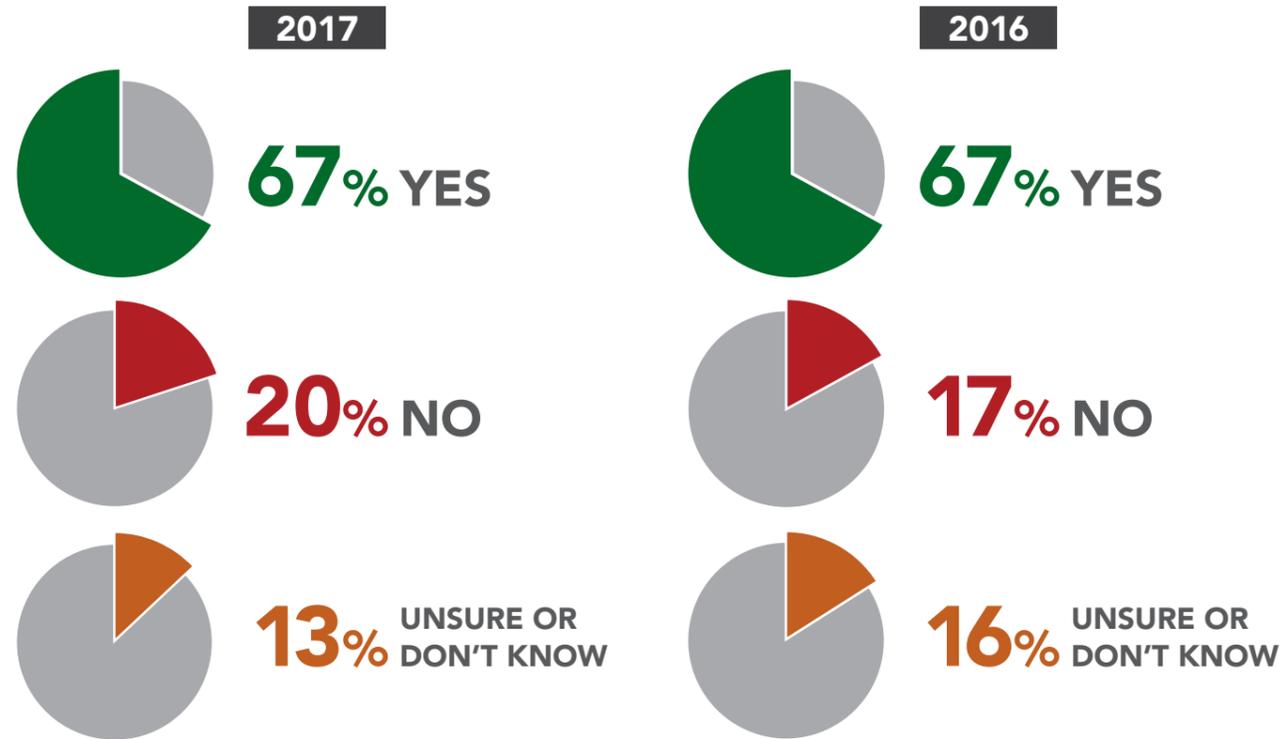
more than half of our participants see their attitude to employing skilled people with disability as positive.

CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITY

AWARENESS AND IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITY

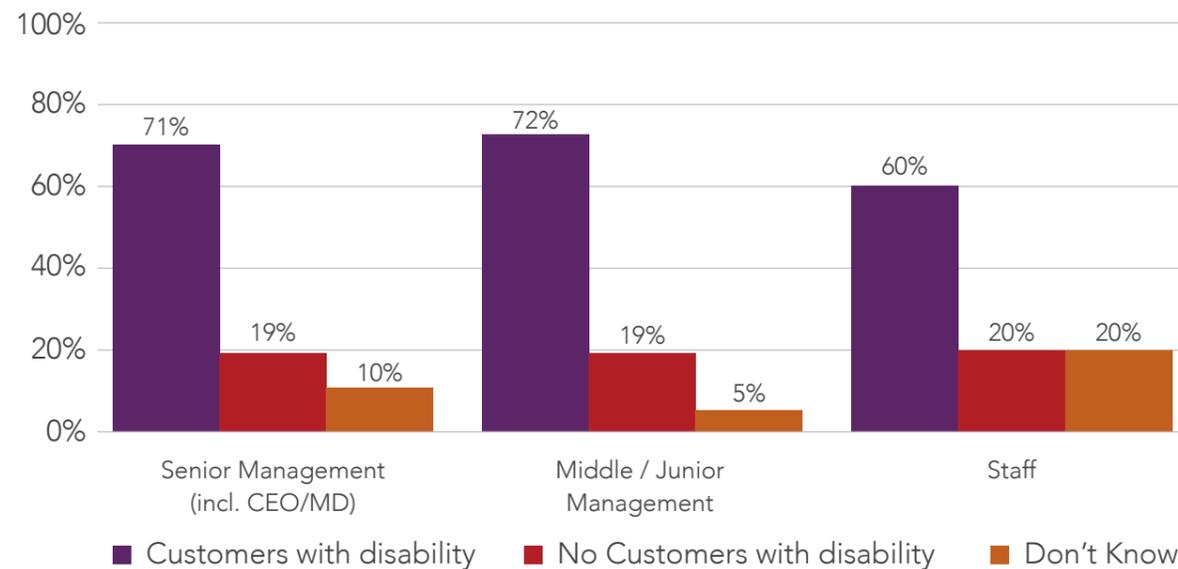
There has been a consistent trend in Australian businesses acknowledging customers with disability – for two thirds (67%) of these businesses, their customer base includes people with disability.

Q: Do your customers include people with disability?

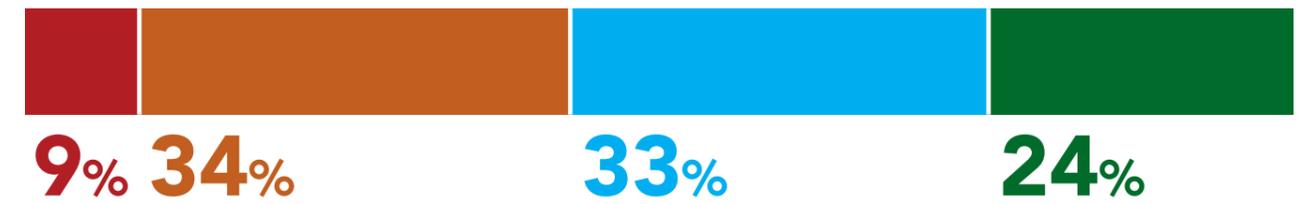


Interestingly, staff (despite being more likely to connect directly with customers) are less likely to believe their customers are people with disability.

Q: Do your customers include people with disability?



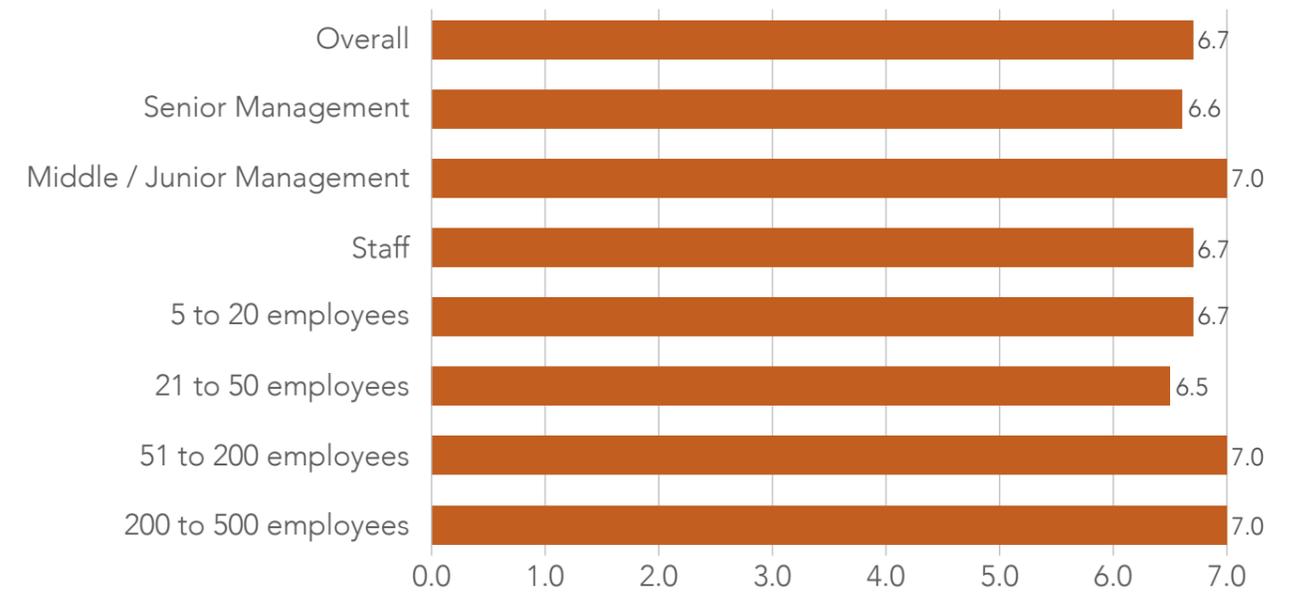
Q: On a scale of 1-10 how relevant do you think customers with disability are to your organisation's business?



Free text responses indicated that 45% of participants who scored 1 to 6, felt that:
"These customers aren't relevant to our business... we have no customers with disabilities"

While 52% of those scoring between 7 and 10 felt:
"All customers are important... everyone should be treated the same"

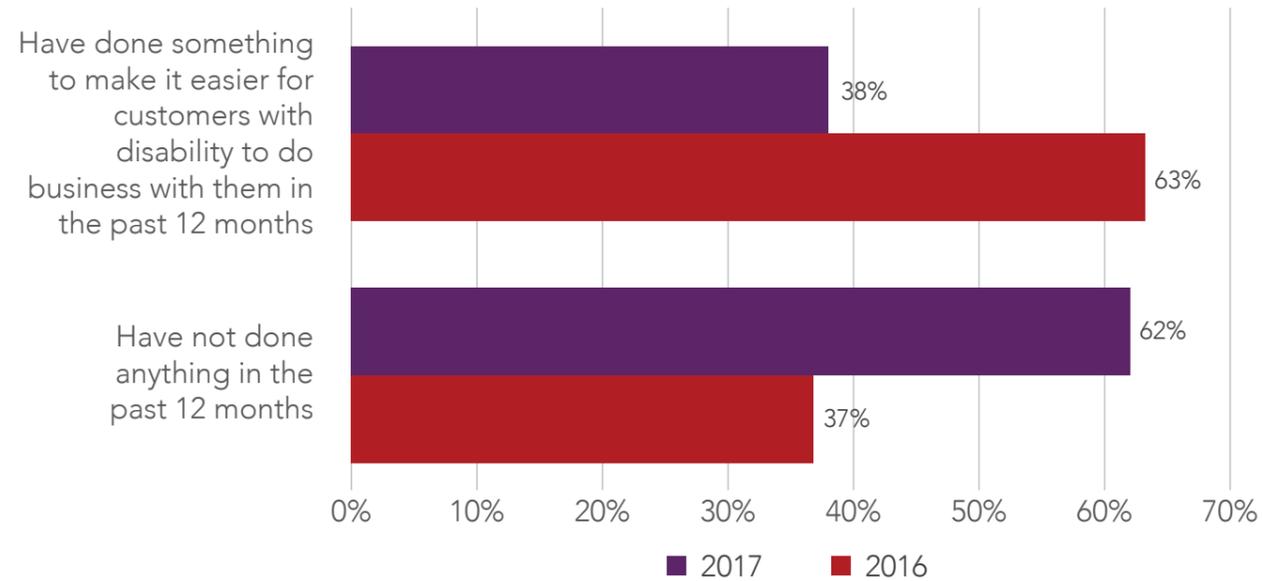
Companies with 21 to 50 employees rate the importance of customers with disability lowest at just 6.5 on a scale of 10, where 1 is not important at all and 10 is extremely important.



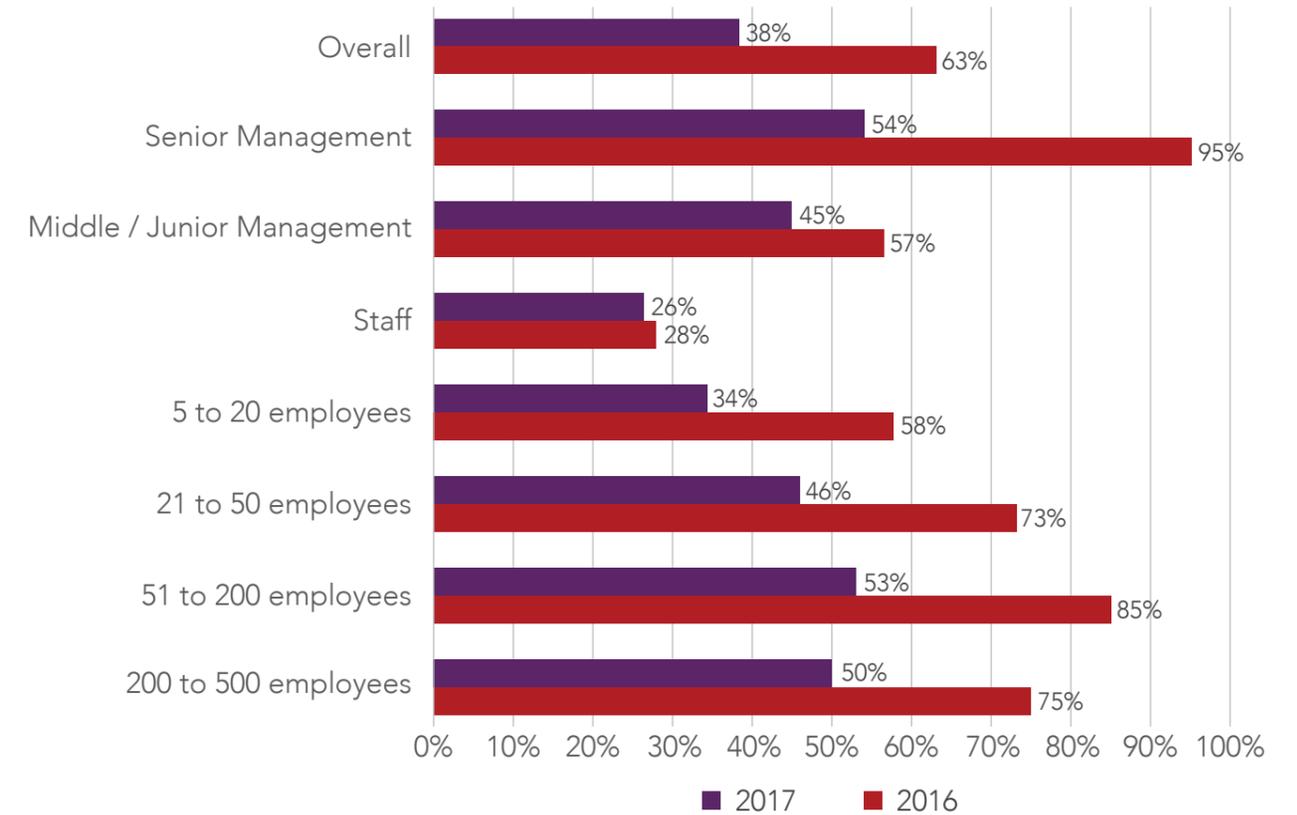
ACTION AND INACTION

Around four in ten businesses have done something in the past 12 months to make it easier for customers with disability, with a focus on improving physical access. This is a significant decline to 2016.

Q: In the last 12 months have your staff or your organisation done anything to make it easier for customers with disability to do business with you?



When comparing across job role and size of business, this represents a decline across the board. In 2016, 95% of Senior Managers reported they had done something to make it easier for customers with disability while in 2017, this decreased to just 54%.



Physical access to premises, such as installing ramps, wheelchair friendly modifications and updating bathrooms, are the main areas where businesses have made improvements.

Q: What was it that your organisation did to make it easier for customers with disability to do business with you?



51%
PHYSICAL
ACCESS



23%
COMMUNICATION



13%
SERVICE
OFFERING



3%
STAFFING

Those who have done nothing cite a lack of specific request as the main reason (50%)

Q: What was the reason for not making it easier for customers with disability to do business with you?

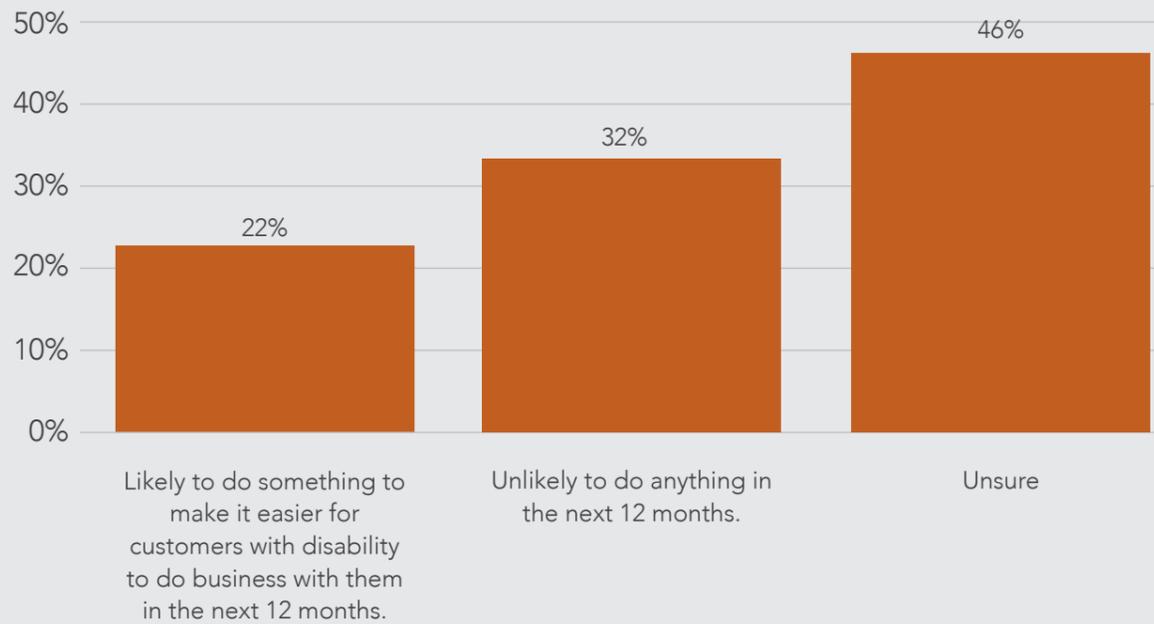


This reveals a very passive culture in relation to making adjustments for customers with disability. More work is required to challenge this passive approach and educate business of the benefit of designing for dignity.

FUTURE PLANS

One in five businesses believe they're likely to do something in the next 12 months to make it easier for customers with disability.

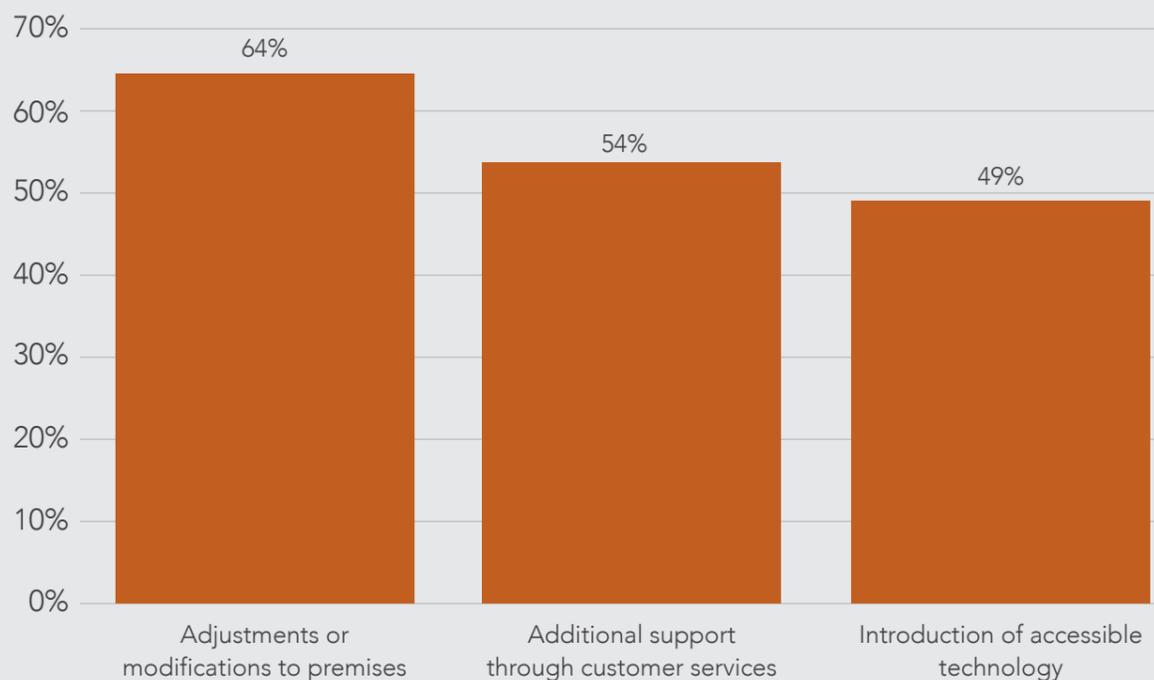
Q: Is your organisation likely to make changes in the next 12 months to make it easier for customers with disability to do business with you?



TYPE OF CHANGES

We also enquired about the type of changes that they were likely to make that would assist customers with disability. Modifying premises was the most likely change (64%) with additional customer service support (54%), and accessible technology (49%).

Q: What type of change is your organisation likely to make?

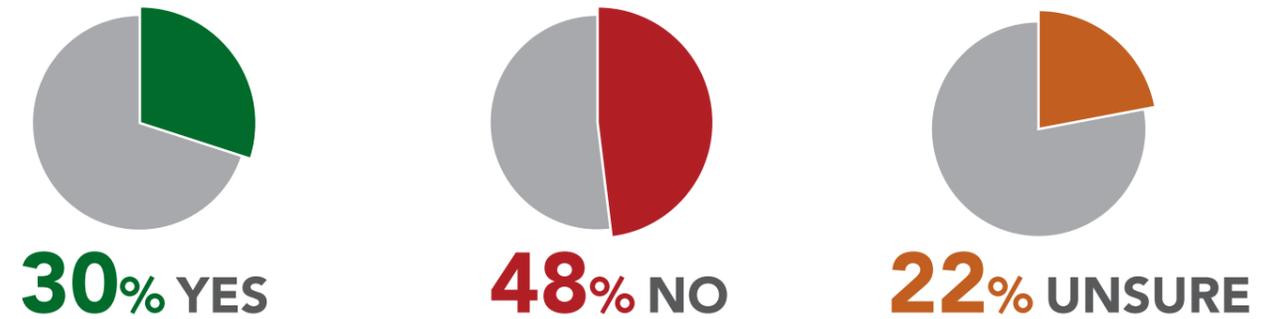


EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

AWARENESS AND IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITY

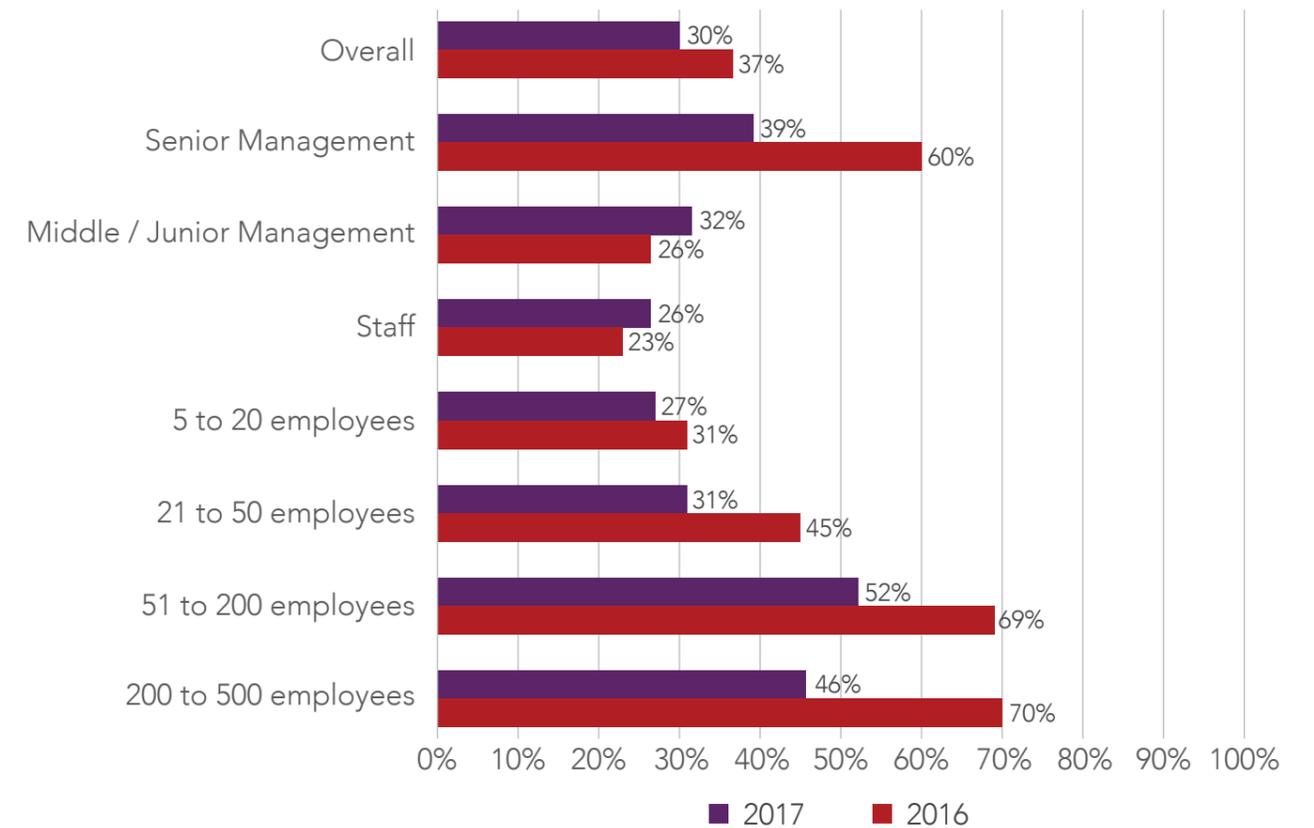
Less than one in three businesses are aware that they employ people with disability.

Q: To your knowledge does your organisation employ people with disability?



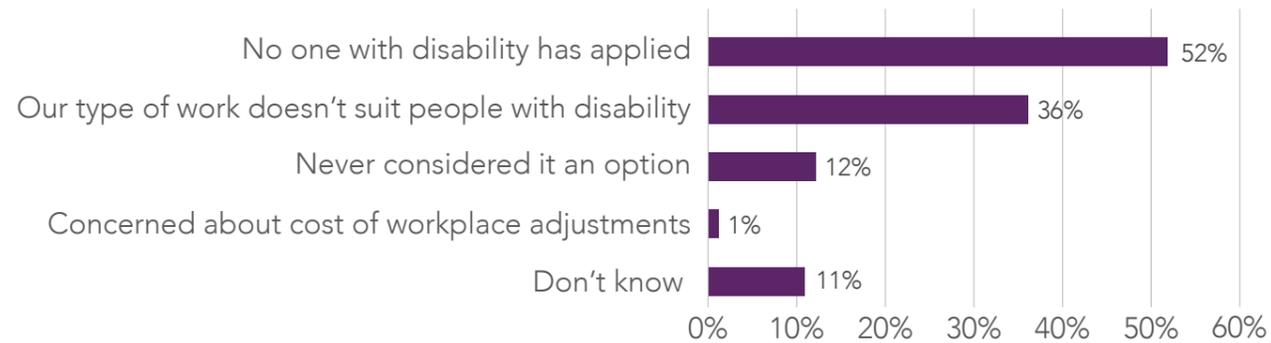
When comparing across job role and size of business, there has been a decline in the awareness of some sections, while others have increased. For example, the proportion of Senior Managers who are aware that they have employees with disability has declined from 60% in 2016 to 39% in 2017.

Q: To your knowledge does your organisation employ people with disability?



WHY ORGANISATIONS HAVEN'T EMPLOYED PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

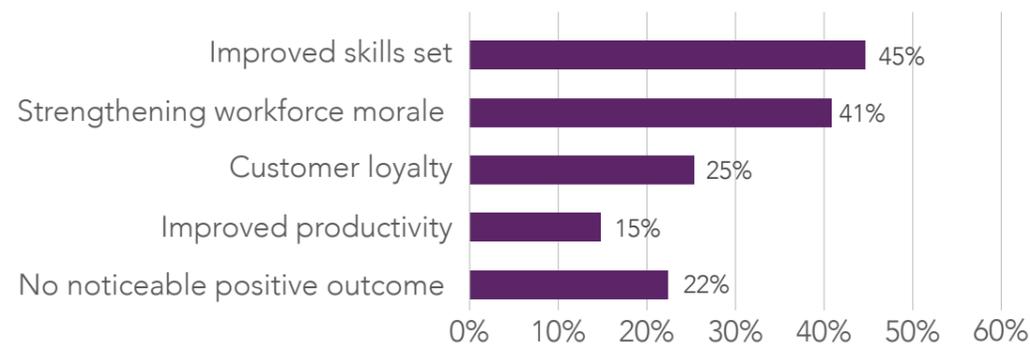
Reasons for not employing people with disability include:



THE BENEFITS OF EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

We asked organisations that have employed a person with disability if they noticed any positive outcomes as a result. The results provide us with an insight into the business benefits of employing people with disability including:

Q: Have you noticed any positive outcomes as a result?



ACTION AND INACTION

Participants across organisations and at different levels within organisations were positive about their organisation's attitude to employing suitably skilled people with disability. While an average of 58% of people were positive about their organisations attitude 30% of people were neutral, 8% were unsure and 4% were negative.

Q: What do you think your organisation's attitude to employing suitably skilled people with a disability is?

Participants see the inclusion of people with disability as less important for employees with a mean importance score of just 6.0, compared to 6.7 for customers.

Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not important and 10 is extremely important, how relevant / important do you think job applicants with disability are to your organisation?



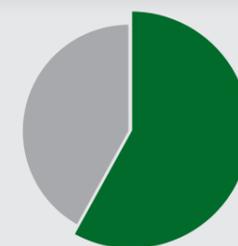
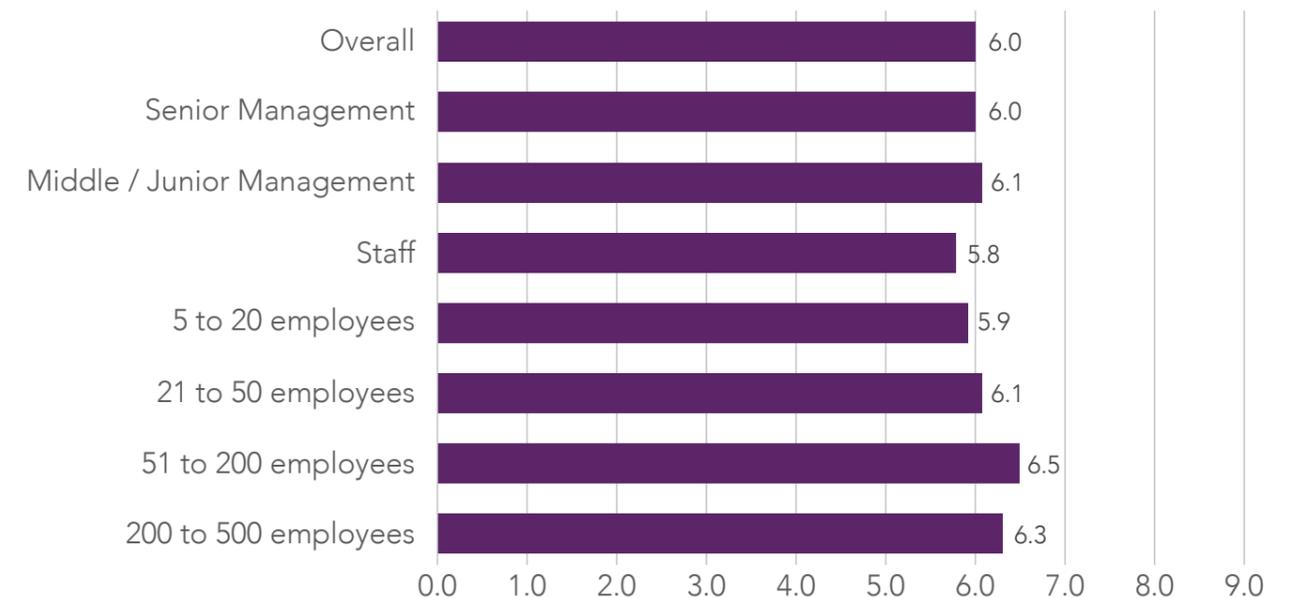
Free text responses indicated that 32% of participants who scored 1 to 6, felt that:

"People with disability are not appropriate for our work / relevant to our situation"

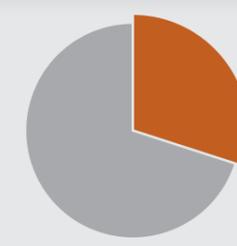
While 39% of those scoring between 7 and 10 felt:

"All employees should be treated equally... disability should be irrelevant"

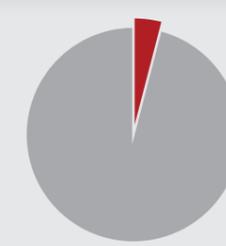
Staff rate the relevance of employees with disability lowest at 5.8 and businesses with fewer than 20 employees also rate the relevance of employees low at just 5.9.



58% POSITIVE



30% NEUTRAL



4% NEGATIVE

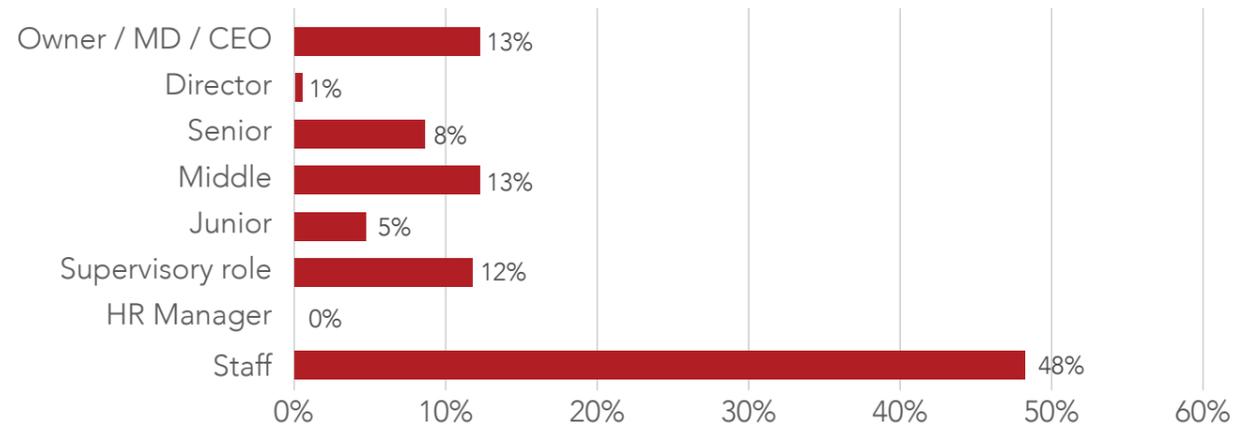


8% UNSURE

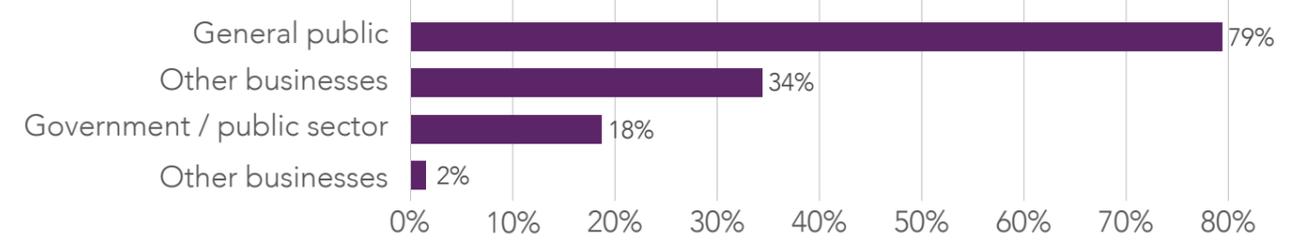
While this represents a decline since 2016, it should be noted that the neutral response category was not included in the questionnaire design previously.

WHO ARE OUR PARTICIPANTS

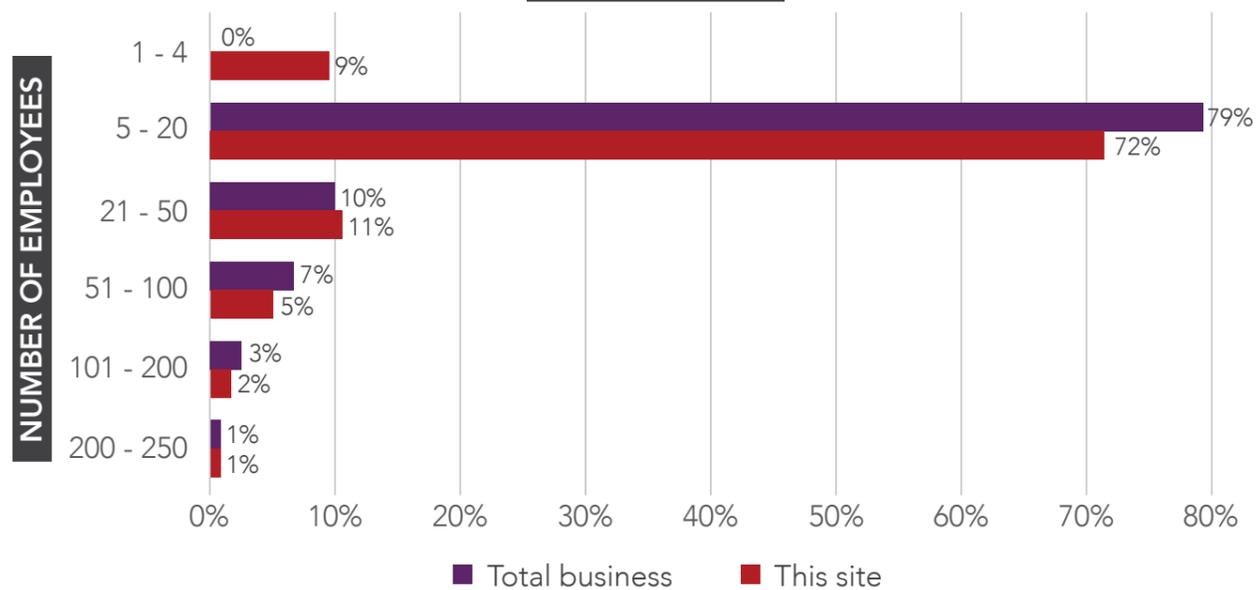
JOB ROLE



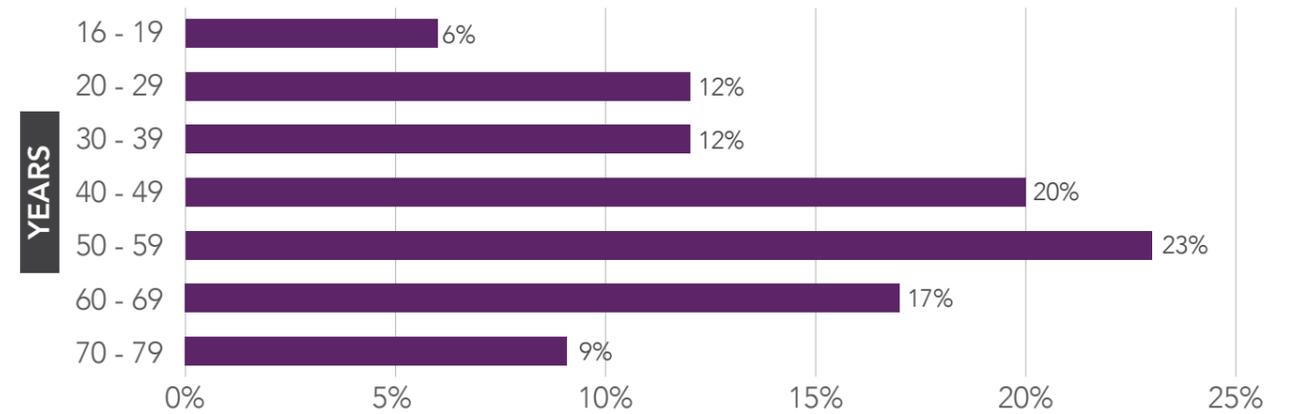
CUSTOMER BASE



BUSINESS SIZE

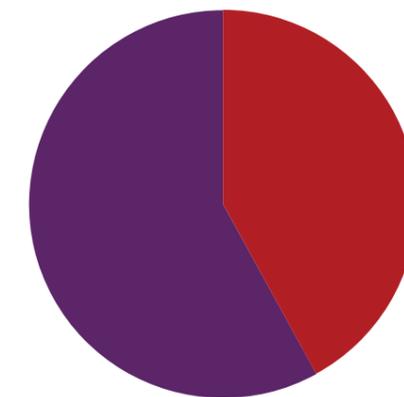


RESPONDENT AGE



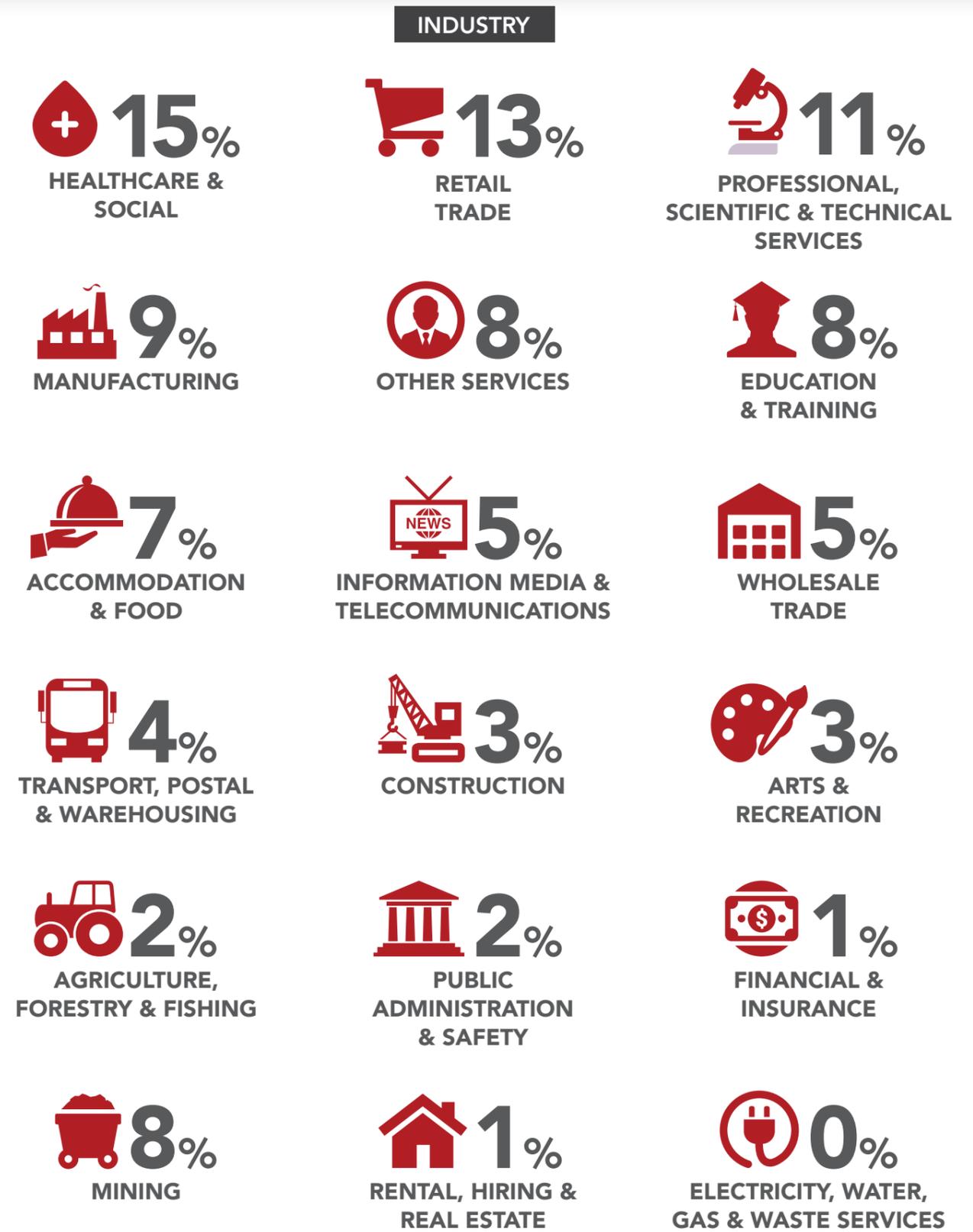
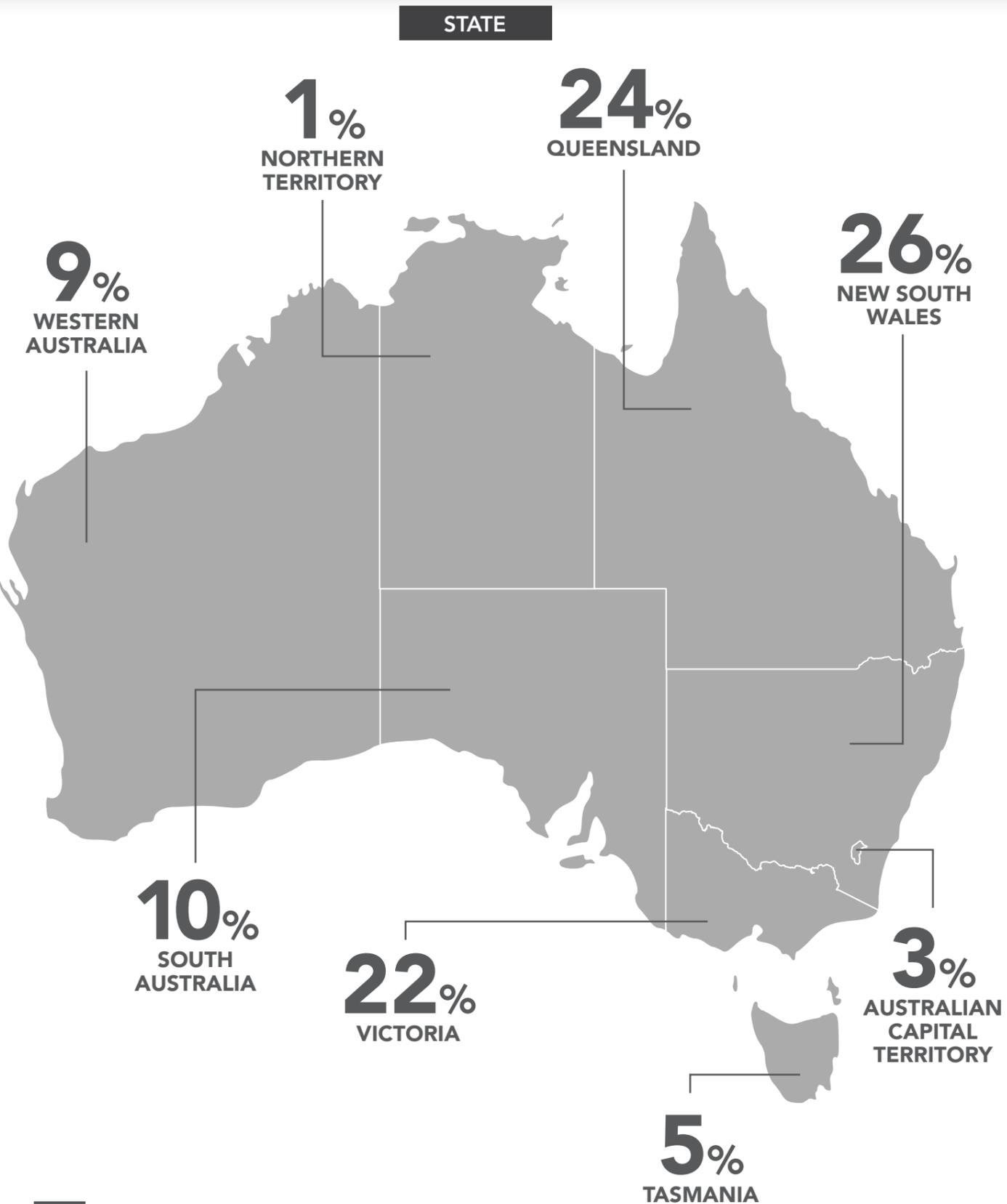
RESPONDENT GENDER

**58%
FEMALE**



**42%
MALE**

WHO ARE OUR PARTICIPANTS (CONTINUED)





ANDisability



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