Parents' feelings about and use of social media:

Playgroup WA survey research findings report

A research project by Edith Cowan University

in collaboration with Playgroup WA

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Executive summary

This study was conducted in partnership with Playgroup WA and Edith Cowan University to capture information about social media and digital technology use by parents of young children and how their social media use impacts parenting. The aim of this research is to assist in communicating with, and supporting, Australian parents. The research aims to provide benefits for organisations who work with parents and give parents information on social media use.

Parents with at least one child or children aged 0 to 8 years were asked to complete a short online survey. The survey received ethics approval from Edith Cowan University. A similar survey was also undertaken ten years ago, so these findings are part of a longitudinal study to understand how parents of children aged 0 to 8 use social media and digital technologies, and their views on the benefits and disadvantages of social media. The survey also sought to identify parents' views about privacy, the Australian social media ban and their hopes (and concerns) regarding their children's digital futures.

The survey received responses from 726 parents, of whom 668 reported using social media and then responded to most questions related to social media. Respondents were predominantly female, most commonly aged 26 to 45, and largely living in Perth or other urban areas. Most worked part-time and were university educated. The survey reflected Australia's multiculturalism, with one third of respondents born overseas and 16% speaking a language other than English at home. The vast majority, 99%, use mobile phones to access social media, and most respondents use social media every day, commonly for one to two hours while their children are asleep.

Overall, the findings reveal a complex and often conflicted relationship with social media, digital technology and privacy. Parents strongly value social media for connection, information, events, parenting advice, news, and entertainment. Meta-

owned platforms dominate parents' social media use, with Facebook, Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp the most frequently used and preferred platforms.
At the same time, parents are aware of social media's negative effects. Respondents overwhelmingly described social media as 'addictive' and superficial. Parents feel social media wastes their time and encourages 'doomscrolling'. Social media also contributes to comparison culture, misinformation, and increases the likelihood of being exposed to scams or other predatory online behaviour. Parents are also concerned about AI, and whether their children will become over-reliant on it.

A key finding of this survey is that it confirms earlier findings about the privacy paradox. Survey results show parents are concerned about their children's privacy, yet they still continue to post photos of their children online. Parents hope their children can balance the lure of the online world, while still maintaining an offline life, enjoying a creative, safe, and 'wholesome' childhood. Almost half of parents say age 16 or older is the best age for children to have access to a digital device.

The survey also shows that parents continue to rely on face-to-face health and wellbeing information, including doctors, child health nurses, and other allied health professionals. At the same time, online health professional 'influencers' are popular among parents and are commonly followed.

The survey findings point to opportunities for Playgroup WA as a well-known and recognised organisation to provide information and support to parents in both the offline and online space, meeting their needs, and possibly addressing and assisting in their desire for their children to have a safe, creative and 'wholesome' childhood.

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Literature Review

Social media in modern parenting

Social media has had a significant effect on modern society, including the way we parent. Social media use by parents is now ubiquitous and has both positive and negative effects (Archer & Kao, 2018; Chalklen & Anderson, 2017; Lin et al., 2019). Where previous generations sought support from family, friends and medical professionals, social media has become a primary source of information and advice, increasing parents' access to information, resources, and support networks (Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health 2023; Kurt, 2023). While this diverse and ever-expanding range of knowledge has benefits, it can at the same time, result in an information 'overload' of often conflicting information that can be overwhelming and difficult to evaluate (Mertens et al., 2024). Parents often have difficulty assessing what information is accurate, as social media content is largely unregulated and 'unpoliced' raising questions about whether the information provided is accurate or unbiased (Frey et al., 2023). Increasingly, concerns are being raised about the influence and independence of social media owners, who may be influenced and motivated by commercial incentives and algorithmic curation (Hödl & Myrach, 2023).

While navigating their own viewing content, parents must also make decisions about their children's use of social media while receiving 'conflicting advice, impractical screen use recommendations and risk-focussed media messaging' (Langton et al., 2028, p. 218). A focus on risks and other negative aspects of social media use was confirmed by Mannell and colleagues (2024) who found that research on social media use by families has tended to be overly focussed on the risks, particularly in relation to screen time.

Parents' motivations for using social media

Despite the publicised and emphasised risks associated with social media, its use has become inseparable from, and critically important in, individuals' daily lives (Aydoğdu

et al., 2023). Social media is a valuable resource for parents raising children at all stages of their parenting journey but is particularly useful for new parents in their transition to parenthood as a person's familiar identity, roles, and responsibilities are significantly transformed (Chee et al., 2023). Social media offers an environment for new parents' experiences to be narrated and negotiated (Orton-Johnson, 2017).

For new parents who may have questions or doubts, and would benefit from additional support, social media can become a key source of information and emotional support (Lee & Lee, 2022). New mothers' social media use can help alleviate pressures including stress, anxiety and depression at a period of significant change but may also contribute to negative feelings (Archer & Kao, 2018). Smith et al., (2020) found pregnant women turn to social media for both social and emotional support and to obtain health information - particularly to determine whether their symptoms were normal, to understand foetal development, and to learn what to expect throughout pregnancy. For mothers in particular, social media offers a site to reflect on their mothering practice, an important domain through which stories, identities, and practices of parenting are contested and redefined (Orton-Johnson, 2017).

Social media can provide access to emotionally and socially supportive communities (Frey et al. 2022). For parents of children with ongoing illnesses, conditions, or disabilities, social media can be a valuable source of knowledge and connection, building community with parents in similar circumstances (Council on Communications and Media et al., 2016). Similarly for parents experiencing rare or unusual events, social media can provide ready access to information and provide reassurance (Lee & Lee, 2022).

Accessibility

A key benefit of social media for parents is its 24/7 accessibility despite geographical barriers (Frey et al. 2022). Given the vast variety of social media platforms and sites, it is likely that parents will be able to find a site that is suitable for their needs at almost any point of their parenting journey. The accessibility of social media enables parents to access information quickly and easily, providing answers to almost any question related to parenting at the time it is needed (Smith et al., 2020). Parents appreciate

being able to be online anonymously and participate in online groups as an observer if they are not yet ready to fully engage (Smith et al., 2020).

Information delivered online can be accessed around families' routines and work commitments and may benefit unengaged families and families living in remote areas or who lack transport to attend in-person appointments (Canário et al., 2022).

Online information is considered to be more appealing and interactive compared to face-to-face methods of information delivery, which often have high dropout rates (Gomes et al., 2021). Although information gathered from traditional health sources is undoubtedly valuable and important, information gathered online is often more detailed and specific than what is typically available through health-professional consultations or traditional hard copy educational materials such as books or pamphlets (Lee & Lee, 2022).

The rise of influencers

Influencers are defined as people who have established a substantial number of relationships on social media and can influence their audience (Enke & Borchers, 2019). According to Harff and colleagues (2022, p.831), influencers are normal, everyday people who became prominent on social media by skilful curation and presentation. In the past five years there has been a 101.6% increase in mum influencers on social media, and their 'influence' continues to grow (Praveen & Dharani, 2025).

Influencers cross traditional boundaries and can act as 'intermediary, content distributor, creative content producer, community manager, testimonial, strategic counsellor, and event host' (Borchers, 2019, p.255). Arriagarda & Bishop, (2021, p. 568) define influencers as 'highly regarded tastemakers'.

Parent influencers draw on the accessibility of social media to connect with their audience, capitalizing on the ease of crafting engaging and concise content, and constructing a large and devoted follower base. Influencers are often perceived as 'experts' in their particular area (Kim & Kim, 2021). Parents may even consider advice from online influencers more influential than medical professionals (Chee et al., 2023).

Influencer effects

Engaging with social media influencers and their followers, has both affirming and harmful effects (Chee et al., 2023). Influencers are increasingly aware of how to produce high-quality content, and provide relatable, real-life experiences (Chee et al., 2023). As already discussed, the benefit to parents in accessing support is considerable. Engaging with influencers and their communities, can help parents draw on the communities' knowledge for information, and access support (Chee et al., 2023). However, Wasike (2025) suggests the relationship between influencer and follower is unique and involves high levels of trust and credibility. Parents may be unaware of how much influence influencers are having on them (Chee et al., 2023). While many parents feel they are engaged in a community, there is also a risk of followers developing a parasocial relationship with an influencer which creates one-sided feelings of intimacy and familiarity that may not be reciprocated (Chee et al., 2023).

A myriad of other concerns have been raised around influencers including around issues of misinformation, unrealistic portrayals of family life, biased content, and parents relying on influencer opinions above evidence-based healthcare advice (Chee et al., 2023).

Influencer effects: Comparison culture While social media can inspire positive changes, it can also create feelings of inadequacy when aspirational standards seem unattainable (Pellegrino, 2024). Parents make comparisons between themselves and the influencers' idealised images of parenthood (Egmose et al., 2022). The widespread culture of positivity and selective self-presentation practices can lead to distorted self-perceptions and dissatisfaction among users and create feelings of inadequacy and isolation (Pellegrino, 2024).

Chee and colleagues (2023) found influencers frequently displayed material wealth and a lifestyle that many of their viewers felt was out of reach for them. Parents then felt pressure to meet high ideals in a vast range of areas including childbearing and early parenting, physical appearance (of mother and baby), fitness and health, labour and

birth experiences, breastfeeding, parenting approaches, and children's developmental milestones.

Similarly, social media can often create unrealistic beauty ideals (Gacki et al., 2026). For women who have recently become mothers are in a time of significant change, and these kinds of beauty ideals may impact their self-esteem. In a 2026 study by Gacki and colleagues, Instagram was found to empower and support pregnant women, but at the same time its 'staged authenticity' led to an increase in psychological risks by conveying unrealistic beauty ideals and expectations. These standards and expectations can be particularly problematic for women who compare their own, and their child's physical appearance, to others on social media (Chee et al., 2023). Although representations of diversity are increasing, images on Instagram are largely heterogenous and fit narrow beauty norms (George et al., 2023). To mitigate this, George and colleagues (2023) recommend organisations incorporate more diverse visuals and culturally relevant language to help narrow existing racial and ethnic gaps in health-related knowledge.

However, other research has drawn on social comparison theory and found that online comparison can lead to positive effects for parents (Glatz et al., 2023). Social comparison theory posits that people compare themselves to others, and whether their comparisons are favourable or unfavourable can affect their motivation and self-worth (Crusius et al., 2022; Festinger, 1954). Glatz and colleagues (2023) use social comparison theory to suggest two reasons for positive effects when using social media as a tool for comparison. The first is because parents may feel better, and even superior, compared to other parents they see. The second is that parents receive validation when they feel they are acting similarly to other parents whom they consider to be doing well.

Influencer effects: Privacy paradox and sharenting Sharenting is a portmanteau of the words 'sharing' and parenting' and involves posting images, photos or videos of children online (Archer, 2019). Sharenting by influencers has had an effect on non-influencers - the 'everyday mothers', who may follow the influencers' example, sharing their child's images and stories, sometimes from the first ultrasound scan (Archer, 2019, p.47). A study of British parenting influencers found that children appeared in

over 75% of the posts, with sponsorships and product advertisements present in almost half of the posts featuring children (Baxter and Czarnecka, 2025). Baxter and Czarnecka (2025) concluded that children's images are frequently used strategically by influencers for financial gain and call for governments to intervene to prevent this practice. While influencers may have a financial reason for sharing images of children, parents are more likely to share images to please family and friends, and garner support and social capital, (Archer, 2019). However, parents are aware that this 'privacy paradox' also potentially risks their children's wellbeing. Despite this awareness, parents' do not use pseudonyms to protect their children's privacy as they believe they are not using social media in the same way as influencers (Archer, 2019).

Influencer effects: Misinformation and echo chambers Influencers are frequently seen as credible, trustworthy opinion leaders and this implied, and possibly unearned, trust can mean they can be a problematic source of misinformation (Harff et al., 2022). A lack of regulation around influencer-generated pregnancy and parenting content increases the risk of misinformation and potential harm to women and their children (Hives et al., 2022). This risk is exacerbated because most women do not discuss the information they obtain online with their healthcare providers (Hives et al., 2022).
An echo chamber can occur in like-minded groups on social media and occurs in an environment where the prevailing information or viewpoint amplified, while dissenting perspectives are downplayed or excluded (Frey et al., 2022). When the message is repeated, it becomes to be seen as the singular truth. Anti-vaccination groups are notable examples of online echo chambers (Bradshaw et al., 2021; Frey et al., 2022).

Algorithms

Increasingly content is being delivered to social media users as a result of the social media algorithm. As noted by Carah (2021) we have witnessed a shift from bounded, shared narratives toward the algorithmic governance of social media, where personalised information is organised to actively manage and monetise attention.
Das (2023) suggests parents have little mechanical or technical understanding of algorithms and may be unaware of how information is provided to them. This lack of

understanding is reinforced by the complex, 'opaque' nature of algorithms (Hödl & Myrach, 2023, p.497).

However, Bruns (2019) takes a more optimistic approach and suggests that although algorithms structure information visibility on social media, social media users do not exist in fully enclosed echo chambers and filter bubbles. Instead, users are exposed to a range of ideas, even opposing ideas, but the algorithm assists them by providing information suited to their existing preferences.

Conclusion

Since its inception, social media has been accessed by parents to navigate parenting related issues. The role of influencers has continued to shift and transform and will continue to do so. There is a need for media savviness and digital literacy. Health care professionals can play a key role in developing strategies that support new parents, while also helping them navigate their evolving online identities and critically reflect on their own digital presence (Gacki et al., 2026).

Ultimately, parents and caregivers, rather than influencers, are the main influence on children when modelling and managing a child's digital interactions (Milford et al., 2022). However, as influencers are now perceived as opinion leaders (Casaló et al., 2018; Harff et al., 2022; Kaňková et al., 2025) there is therefore an increasing need for digital awareness and digital literacy among parents (Archer & Kao, 2018; Frey et al., 2022; Mertens et al., 2023). There is also a need for influencers, particularly influencers who post about health, to understand their impact and behave ethically (Chee et al., 2023).

The objectives of the research are to address the following questions:

RQ1 How does social media use, including following and interacting with parent influencers, impact parents and parenthood?

RQ2 What do parents feel about their children's current and future use of digital media, including parent's hopes and fears for their children's digital futures?

Methodology

The chief investigator researcher, Dr Catherine Archer, developed an online survey, using Qualtrics software, based on the previous survey conducted by her in partnership with Playgroup WA in 2016. The survey questions were further developed in consultation and collaboration with Playgroup WA and aimed to answer the two research questions. A number of formal wellbeing and social media use numerical scales were included as well as questions aiming to elicit qualitative responses. As the survey was conducted following the Government's social media minimum age laws for under-16s, questions related to this law, parental views on it, and its impacts were included. Following pilot testing, the survey was distributed on email via Playgroup WA's database in March 2026 to parents and had a screening test to ensure parents of young children 0-5 answered the question. Follow up emails were also sent to elicit responses. The survey received responses from 726 parents, of whom 668 reported using social media. Those who used social media were then asked to complete the rest of the survey. Note that some questions were not obligatory so received fewer responses, hence different questions had different total numbers of responses. The survey was then analysed by the research team, including Catherine Archer and Deborah Williams. Deborah Williams wrote the majority of this report with guidance and input from Catherine Archer.

The researchers acknowledge the collaboration and input from Playgroup WA, including Marketing Manager Caroline Ince. Ethics approval was sought and obtained for the survey from Edith Cowan University. A prize of a $100 gift card was awarded randomly to one participant.

Analysis and summary

The Playgroup WA Survey reflects complex, and sometimes conflicting, findings around social media and digital technology use by respondents. Parents recognise social media as a valuable source of relevant information and connection, while also overwhelmingly characterising social media as 'addictive' and 'superficial'. Parents report using social media for communication and to maintain connection with family and community, yet they feel social media wastes their time, and they identify 'doomscrolling' as problematic.

Safety emerged as a key theme. Mobile phones are valued as tools that keep children physically safe when they are travelling to and from school, yet parents are also concerned about their children's safety and privacy online.

While they listed a range of positives and negatives of social media, it was about 50/50 as to whether they would feel sad if their favourite social media platform closed. This further suggests a potentially conflicted / dysfunctional relationship with social media.

Other survey findings reflect the dominance of Meta owned platforms as the preferred social media platform by parents. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Messenger are the most frequently used, and also considered the main platforms by parents. Despite some media reporting that Facebook use is declining (Bhaimiya, 2026; Milmo & Skopeliti, 2021; Scott, 2025) the findings in this survey suggest Facebook is still the dominant social media platform for parents.

Overall, the survey findings suggest parents' use of social media is multi-layered. Parents value social media's ability to provide information and connection, yet also view it as addictive, distracting and dangerous. This complexity is particularly evident when it relates to their children's use of social media. Parents want to protect their children from the negatives of social media and ensure they have an 'offline' life. Due to the identified negatives of social media, parents largely support the Australian social media ban rolled out in 2025.

Positives of social media Two main positive themes about social media use emerged throughout the survey: **connection and information**. Over three quarters (77%) of

survey participants use their phone to feel connected to the world. Almost all (99%) access social media with their mobile phone, with 69% saying that social media makes them feel connected to other people.
The main reasons to use social media were to catch up with family and friends and for information. Passing time when bored, zoning out, finding out about events, and feeling connected were all common reasons for using social media.
Most use social media every day and between one to two hours each day. However, most parents state their social media use has decreased since having children.

In relation to information, 90% use social media to find out about news, events, pop culture, info and/or current affairs. Many reputable influencers and news outlets were listed for how they find information that is of benefit to them and their families. The ABC emerged as a clear favourite, chosen as the favourite news and current affairs source, podcast, children's education and entertainment source, and radio outlet. Surprisingly, and despite the multilingual nature of the respondents (33% born overseas and 16% speaking a language other than English at home), SBS was not a strong choice as a news source, with only 5% of respondents selecting it as a news source. Just 3% of respondents read their local newspaper.

Another key finding was the popularity of health and medical influencers. A significant number of respondents said they follow Dr Kyla and Nicole Kids Physio, among others. As noted by Chee and colleagues (2023) influencers who have a dual identity as medical professional, have an ethical responsibility which creates a potential conflict of interest. Despite the rise of health influencers, when respondents were asked about sources of health and wellbeing information for themselves and their children, doctors were the most popular choice, slightly higher than Google

Negatives of social media. Two key themes emerged in the questions about the downsides of social media. Respondents overwhelmingly believe social media is what they call 'addictive' and feel that it fuels comparison culture.
Concerns around comparison culture and negative body image can be connected to the wellbeing questions where 37% feel good about themselves some of the time, and

5% feel good about themselves none of the time. A total of 41% of respondents feel confident some of the time and 5% none of the time.
Most respondents think social media wastes time, is superficial, and most are concerned about privacy. Respondents also reported a range of other downsides, including dangers such as divisiveness, hate, predators, scammers, fake news, unreliable information, data collection and disconnection from the people around them. AI is also a concern for parents, with parents questioning its role in their children's education and digital futures. Many parents see AI as 'scary' and are concerned about an over-reliance on AI – with a concern it may negatively impact their children's future. However, despite these concerns, 23% of parents say they use AI as a source of health and wellbeing information for themselves or their children. ChatGPT is the most commonly used AI by respondents.
Respondents are aware social media can be harmful but also use it every day due to it being informative and convenient. About half of parents say they would not mind if social media no longer existed.

Parenting and Protecting Children Parents frequently look for information, in their role as a parent of a young child and as an adult in the world, and social media can provide them with this – as noted by the many information sources they listed. Yet they also see the 'addictive', dangerous, and/or harmful content, wasting time/doomscrolling, and disconnecting from others around them and seek to protect their children from this. Most, 88%, are in favour of the social media ban for under 16s and the majority of parents thought mobiles with internet should wait until age 16+. Parents who support the social media ban frame children as immature, vulnerable, impressionable, and in need of protection. Brain development, online predators, addiction, and bullying are key concerns for parents who support the ban. The survey findings reveal a safety paradox. Many parents see the use of mobile phones as a convenient means of communication and ensuring safety of their children, such as when they start high school or catch public transport to school. Yet at the same time, they also see mobile phones with internet as 'unsafe' - potentially exposing their children to bullying, predators, scams, and unsafe material. When asked about their digital futures, parents

hope their children have balance between the online and offline world and are responsible and safe online.

Privacy is a concern for respondents. A key finding of this research is that respondents are more concerned about their children's privacy than their own. Despite this, 67% of parents report sharing photos of their children online. Parents sharing photos of their children, despite concerns about their privacy, raise questions about cultural norms and the ubiquitous nature of social media. Given the recent French and Spanish legislation giving children more participation and input into their online identities, Australian cultural norms may soon similarly shift (Parr, 2026).
The majority (62%) report using social media in the evening, when their children are in bed. This suggests parents have an understanding that being 'present' when they are with children is valuable and deliberately choose not to engage with social media when they are actively parenting or when their children can observe them. It is important to note that there is stigma around perceived overuse of social media (Ľudviková & Gabdulhakov, 2026). Research on screen time suggests that estimates of time are significantly influenced by social and cultural norms (Dombrowski & Trepte, 2026). Additionally, there is debate about the ability of users to accurately estimate their screen time, raising concerns about the validity of self-report measures which may include overestimation by low users, and underestimation by high users (Kaye et al, 2020).
Respondents seem to view social media as an adult activity that is not suitable for children, particularly given their concerns around the dangers and 'addiction'. Respondents want their children to not use social media until they are mature enough to handle it, and if they are going to use it, to teach them and safeguard them to be safe and digitally literate if they are online.

Wellbeing Parents' responses to the wellbeing questions were broadly positive, with most parents reporting they are emotionally and socially well. The majority of parents feel optimistic, useful, cared for, cheerful, accepted, loved, interested in new things, and close to other people,

The only question that did not have parents responding positively ‘most’ or ‘all’ of the time, related to energy. Only 30% had energy to spare most or all of the time, reflecting the nature of parenting which may be characterised by reduced sleep, expended energy, hands-on activities, and increased stress and anxiety. Still, there were a significant number of parents who did not report positive wellbeing, and these parents should also be considered when reflecting on the survey results. For example, when parents were asked whether the people they care about seem interested in how they are doing, there were 61 parents who only felt that way some of the time. More concerningly there were nine parents who felt the people they care about were interested in how they are doing none of the time. Similarly, there were 14 parents who say they feel loved none of the time. These figures, although small in terms of overall percentage, represent a core group of people who may be in distress and whose wellbeing could benefit from further support or attention.

Survey Results

Section 1. Demographic questions

The 726 respondents had at least once child aged 0 to 8 years of age. Of these respondents, 668 said they use social media.

1.1 What is your gender?

- predominantly female

A total of 97% (634) of respondents were female, 3% (19) were male, and 2 respondents were non-binary of third gender.

1.2 What is your age?

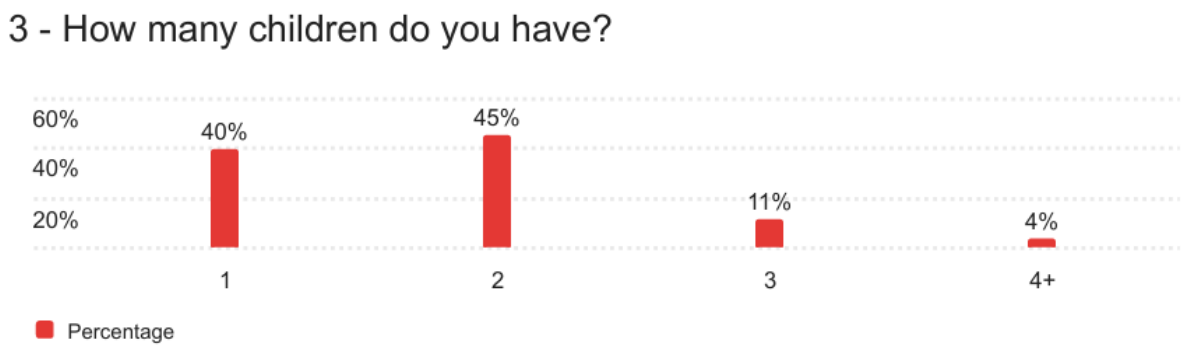
- predominantly aged between 36 and 45

The majority of respondents, 51% (332) were aged between 36 and 45, while 42% (277) were between 26 and 35. 5% (31) were aged between 46 and 55. There were 1% (nine respondents) who were aged 20 to 25, and another 1% (seven) who were aged 56 or over.

1.3 How many children do you have?

- two children most common

The majority of respondents, 45% (298), had two children, while 40% (260) had one child, 11% (73) had three children and 4% (25 respondents) had four or more children.



1.4 Where do you live?

- largely urban

Over half the respondents, 67% (437), lived in Perth or another capital city. A further 11% (70) lived in a country town, and 2% (16) lived in a rural or remote area. There were 7% (47) who lived in a larger regional centre or city. Only 13 % (87 respondents) provided their postcode. The most common postcodes were 6034 Eglinton, and 6164 Cockburn.

1.5 Please indicate the ages of your children. Choose as many as appropriate.

- mostly parents of toddlers

There were 656 responses to this question, and respondents had a wide range of ages of children. The most common age of children was toddlers aged 1 to 3 with 69% (454) having a child in this age range. The next most common aged children were pre-schooler 32% (210), primary school 30% (198), baby aged 0 to 12 months 20% (134), teenager in high school 4% (27) and adult 2% (12). Five percent (34 respondents) were currently pregnant.

1.6 What is your current marital status?

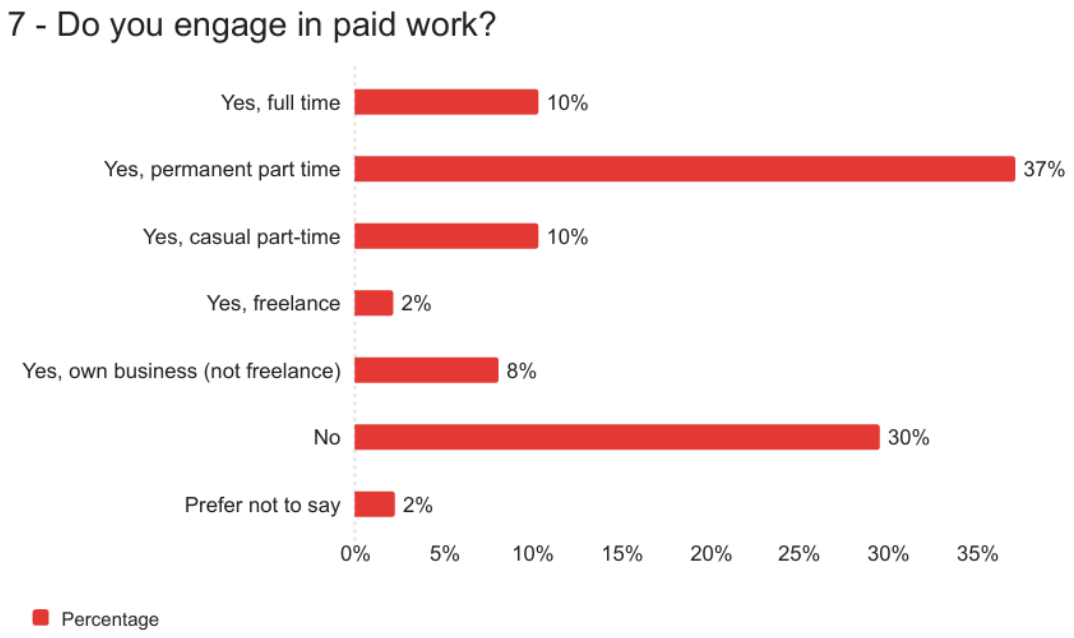
- most partnered, either married or de facto

Most respondents were partnered, either married 69% (455) or de facto 25% (163). Only 4% (27) of respondents were single, 1% (five r) were divorced and one was widowed. There were 1% (5) who preferred not to say.

1.7 Do you engage in paid work?

- part-time work most common among parents

A wide variety of work situations were reported. Most respondents who worked were employed part-time either permanently 37% (244) or casually 10% (68). A minority,10% (68) worked fulltime. A total of 30% (194) did not engage in paid work and 2% preferred not to say. The remaining 8% (53) were business owners, and 2% (14) worked freelance.



1.8 How long have you lived in Australia?

- reflected multicultural Australia

The vast majority of respondents, 89% (586) had lived in Australia for ten years or more. Of the respondents, 6% (51) had lived in Australia for more than five years, 4% (26) for between one and five years, and three had lived in Australia for less than one year.

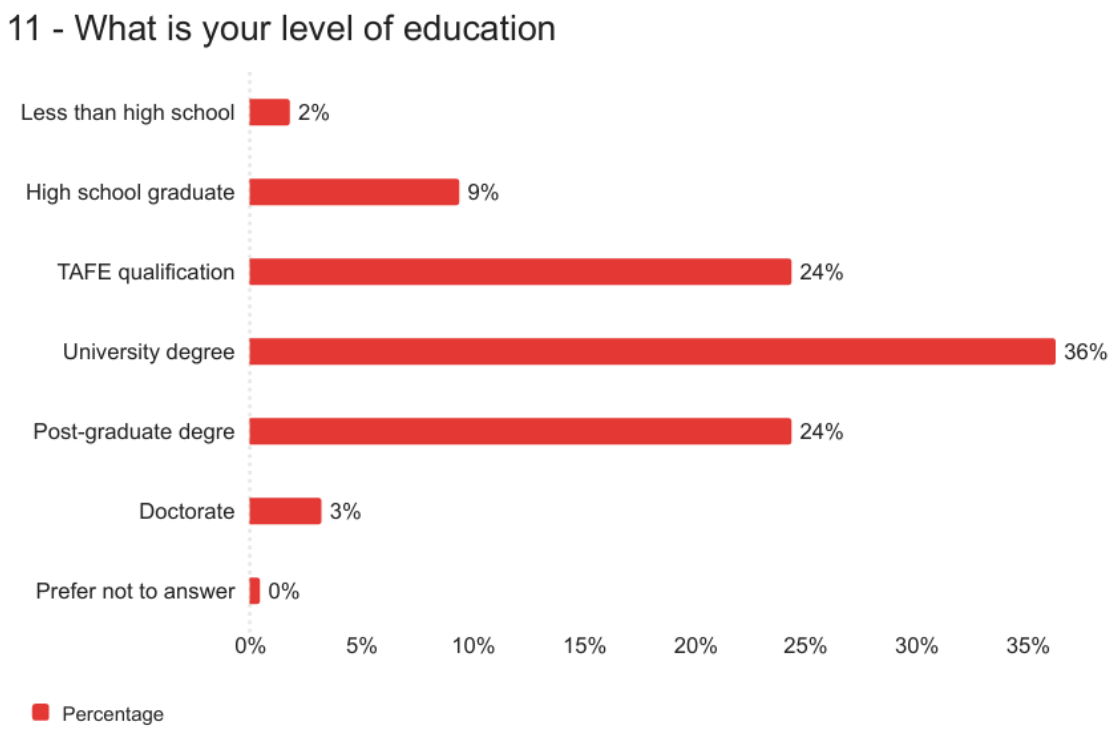
1.9 Where were you born?

Over two thirds of respondents, 67% (441), were born in Australia, with 33% (215) born overseas.

1.10 What is your level of education?

- over half university educated

Most respondents, 36%, (238) had a university degree, 24% (160) had a postgraduate qualification, and 24% (160) had a TAFE qualification. A total of 3% (21) had a doctorate, 9% (62) were high school graduates, with 2% (12) completing less than high school.



1.11 Do you speak any other languages other than English at home?

- English dominated

English was the only language spoken at home by most respondents, at 84% (550). The remaining 16% (104) spoke a language other than English at home. A total of 39 languages other than English were reported. The most common language spoken, other than English, was German (10). This was followed by French, Mandarin and Punjabi (all 9), Spanish (7), Japanese (6), Hindi and Italian (both 5), and Tagalog and Urdu (both 4). Three respondents spoke Afrikaans, Cantonese, Chinese, Gujarati, Maori and Tamil respectively. Two respondents spoke Croatian, Dutch, Farsi, Hebrew, Persian, and Portuguese respectively. One respondent spoke Arabic, Auslan, Bangla, Basque, Filipino, Finnish, Hokkien, Korean, Malayalan, Malay, Mauritian Creol, Russian, Swedish, Telugu, Thai, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese respectively.

Section 2. Parents' Use of Social Media.

2.1 What are the main social media platforms you use? Please select all that apply.

- **Facebook and Meta dominates**

Parents were asked to indicate the main social media platforms they use. They could choose more than one option. A total of 621 respondents answered this question. The findings indicate that Meta owned platforms Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, and WhatsApp represent the top four choices by parents. Facebook was chosen by the majority of parents, with 94% (586) using it. The second most common platform was Messenger, with 81% (500), and third was Instagram with 75% (463. WhatsApp was the fourth most popular with 66% (410) selecting it as a main social media platform. Comparatively lower was YouTube 46% (286 responses), Snapchat 21% (129), TikTok 20% (127), Pinterest 18% (113) and LinkedIn 16% (102). A further 12% (73 people) selected Reddit.

Platforms with fewer than 2% selecting is as a main platform were Threads (15), Substack (15), Blogs (7), X (6) and Telegram (2). Bluesky, Line, Viber and WeChat were each chosen by one person.

2.2 What is your number one frequently used social media platform? Please select one only.

Meta owned platforms again represented the top four choices. Facebook was the most preferred platform with 38% (236). Instagram was the second most common choice with 28% (175), WhatsApp moved to third choice with 13% (82), and Messenger was fourth with 10% (60 choices). The next most frequently used platforms had significantly lower responses, with TikTok 4% (27), YouTube 3% (18), Reddit 2% (11), Snapchat 2% (10) and less than one person were WeChat (1 person), and Pinterest (1 person). The other platforms (Threads, blogs, X) were not selected as most frequently used by any respondents.

2.3 Please specify any social media platforms you regularly use (more than once a week).

There appeared to be some confusion among respondents with this question. There were 312 responses. However, 14 respondents answered ‘as above’ or ‘all of the selected ones in the previous 2 questions’ referring to their previous responses. Another four respondents listed the number of social media platforms they use. When the invalid responses were removed, there were 294 valid responses. Meta owned

platforms dominated responses to this question. Facebook 60% (176), Instagram 49% (143), Messenger 28% (82) and WhatsApp 21% (63) had all been used in the previous week. These were followed by TikTok 13% (37), YouTube 11% (31), Snapchat 9% (26), Reddit 4% (11), Pinterest 3% (10), LinkedIn 2% (5), Threads 1% (2), and Telegram and Discord (1 each).

2.4 About how many hours a day would you spend on social media?

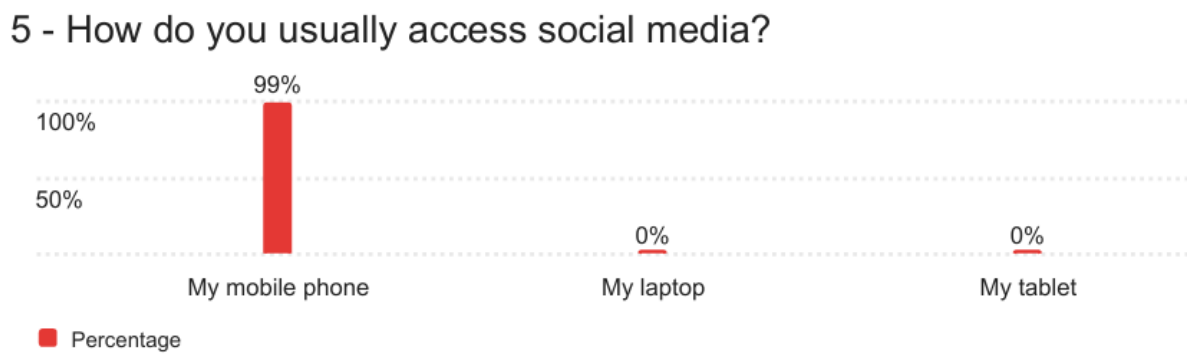
- one to two hours per day most common

Respondents were then asked the number of hours per day they spend on social media. Almost half of respondents, 45% (280) reported spending between one and two hours per day on social media. A total of 21% (134) of respondents said they spent between two and four hours on social media. A further 20% (130) said they spent between half an hour to one hour on social media each day, and 7% said they spent less than half an hour per day on social media (45). Almost 4% of respondents said they spent between four and six hours on social media (23). Less than 2% said they spent six or more hours on social media (9).

2.5 How do you usually access social media?

- **The mobile phone dominates**

Almost 100% of respondents use their mobile phone to access social media, with 99% (617) of the responses recorded. Two respondents said they use their laptop, and a further two said they use their tablet – representing less than one percent of respondents.



2.6 I use my mobile phone to feel connected to the world. Agree or disagree?

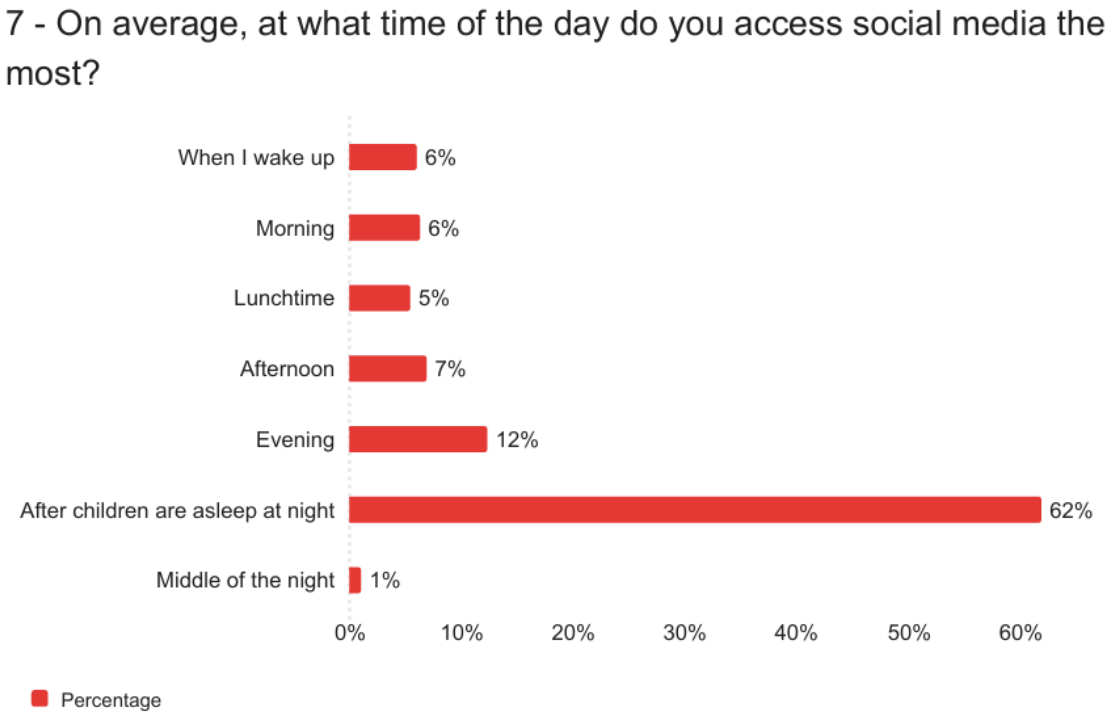
- **Mobile phones aid connection**

Most respondents strongly agree 27% (167) or agree 50% (309) that their mobile phone makes them feel connected to the world. There were 17% (108 respondents) who were neutral about whether their mobile phone made them feel connected to the world. The remaining 5% (31 respondents) disagreed and 1% (six respondents) strongly disagreed that their mobile phone made them feel connected to the world.

2.7 On average, at what time of the day do you access social media the most?

- **Mostly after children's bedtime**

Parents are mostly accessing social media later in the day. Over half of parents 62% (385) mostly access social media when their children are asleep at night. A further 12% (77) mostly access social media in the evening, and 7% (44 parents) access social media in the afternoon. Of respondents who use social media earlier in the day, most access it in the morning 6% (39), when they wake up 6% (37), and at lunch time 5% (34). Just 1% (6) say they mostly access social media in the middle of the night.



2.8 With regards to social media use, what are your main reasons for using social media? Please tick all that apply.

– largely to connect with family and friends

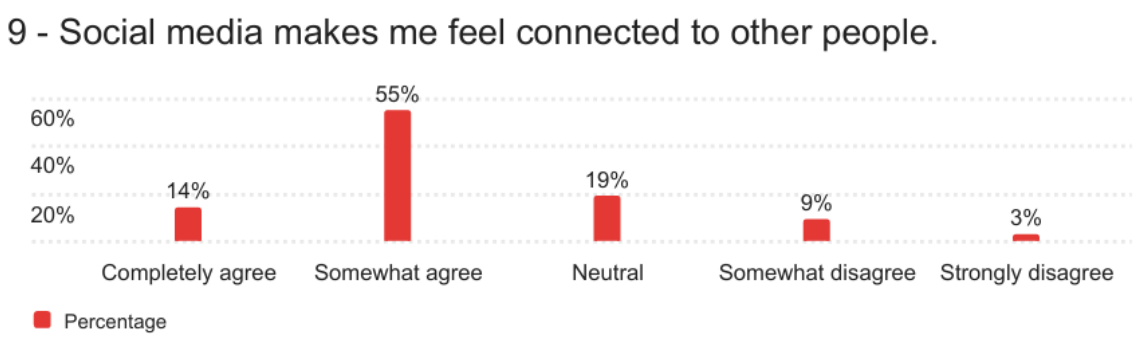
Respondents were asked to select all the reasons they use social media and 621 respondents answered this question. 2587 responses were recorded in 12 categories. A further 39 respondents chose 'other' reasons. The most common reasons respondents use social media were to catch up with family and friends 67% (415) and for information 67% (414). The next two responses reflect social media's role in passing time, with 55% (344) saying they use social media to pass the time when feeling bored, and to zone out 48% (301). The next two most common responses were to learn about events 47% (292) and to feel connected 42% (265). Fewer respondents said they use social media to check up on people's activities and photos 30% (187), for support 16% (102). Work, business and organisation-related responses recorded the fewest responses, with 15% (96 people) using social media to follow a business or brand, 12% (78) using social media for work, and 9% (54 respondents) saying they use social media to promote their business. Just 6% (39 people) said they use social media because 'they would miss out' if they weren't online.

Of the respondents, 6% (39 people) selected 'other' and those responses were largely focused on purchasing items online, with nine respondents stating they use social media for Facebook Marketplace and five people saying they use it to access Buy Nothing groups. Four people said they use for social media for recipes. Of the remaining responses, people said they use social media for volunteering (5), advocacy (3), entertainment (2), out of habit (2), news watching (2), staying connected with people overseas (2), documentary watching (1), podcasts (1) and for venting (1). Three people said they used social media for reasons related to their children ie. to 'watch what my children watch' (1), to help children with schoolwork (1), and for ideas to keep kids occupied (1).

2.9 Social media makes me feel connected to other people. Agree or disagree?

- **Social media aids connection**

Parents feel that social media helps them feel connected. A total of 55% (342 people) somewhat agree and 14% (89) completely agree with the statement that social media makes them feel connected. Of the respondents, 19% (118) were neutral. Just 9% (56) somewhat disagree and 3% (16) strongly disagree that social media makes them feel connected to other people.



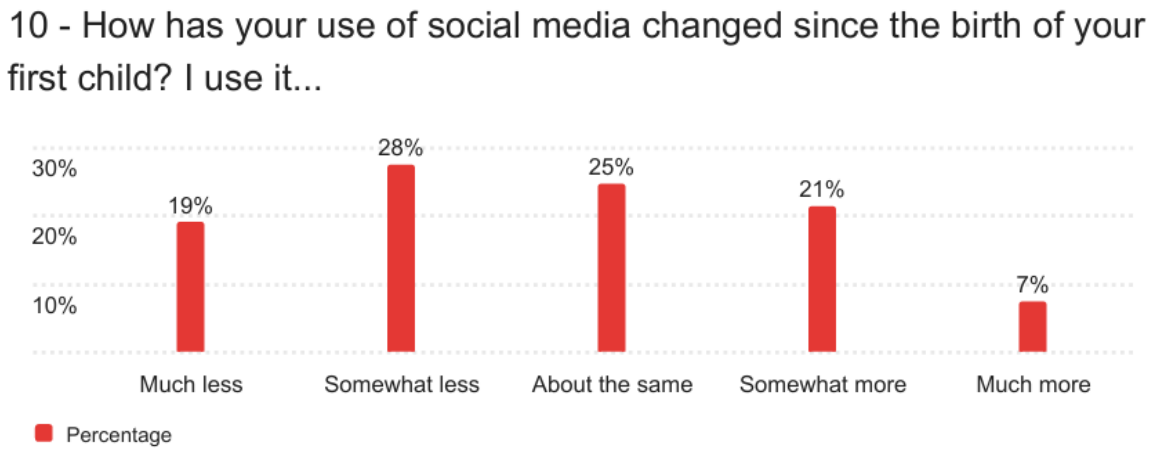
2.10 How has your use of social media changed since the birth of your first child?

- **Social media use decreased since having children**

Respondents were asked whether their social media use had increased or decreased since having their first child. Responses were divided fairly equally, with slightly more parents saying they were using social media less since having a child. In total, 28%

(171) of respondents said their social media use was somewhat less, and 19% (119) said it was much less.

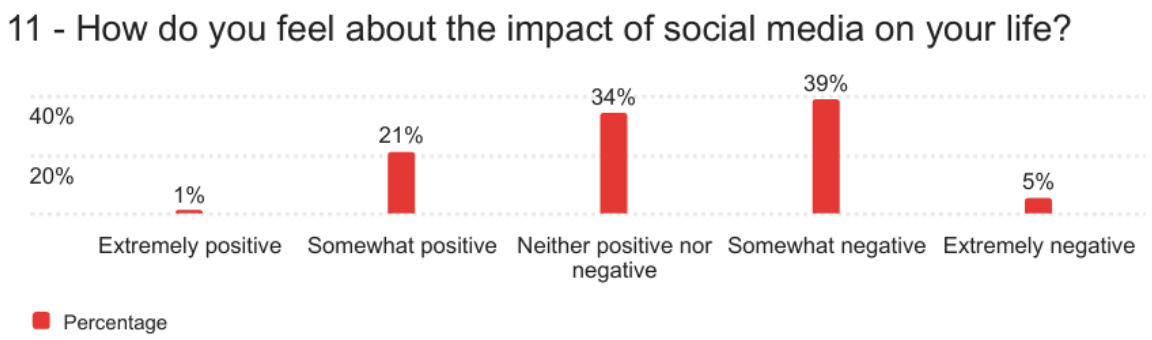
Of the respondents, 25% (153) said their use was about the same. A further 21% (133) said they were using social media somewhat more since having a child, and 7% (45 respondents) said they were using social media much more.



2.11 How do you feel about the impact of social media on your life?

- **Negative feelings about social media's impact.**

When asked about the impact of social media on their life, parents largely report a negative influence. 39% (241) said social media had a somewhat negative impact and 5% (31) parents said social media had an extremely negative impact. In comparison, only 21% (131) said social media had a somewhat positive impact, and 1% (five) reported it was extremely positive. A further 34% (213) said the impact was neither positive nor negative.



2.12 I use social media every day. Agree or disagree?

- **Everyday social media use**

Reflecting the ubiquitous nature of social media, the vast majority of parents use social media every day. A total of 76% (471) strongly agree that they use social media every day, and 20% (124) somewhat agree they use social media every day. There were 2% (13) who neither agreed nor disagreed. Just 2% (13 people) somewhat disagree, and only one parent strongly disagreed that they use social media daily.

2.13 I feel out of touch when I am not using social media. Agree or disagree?

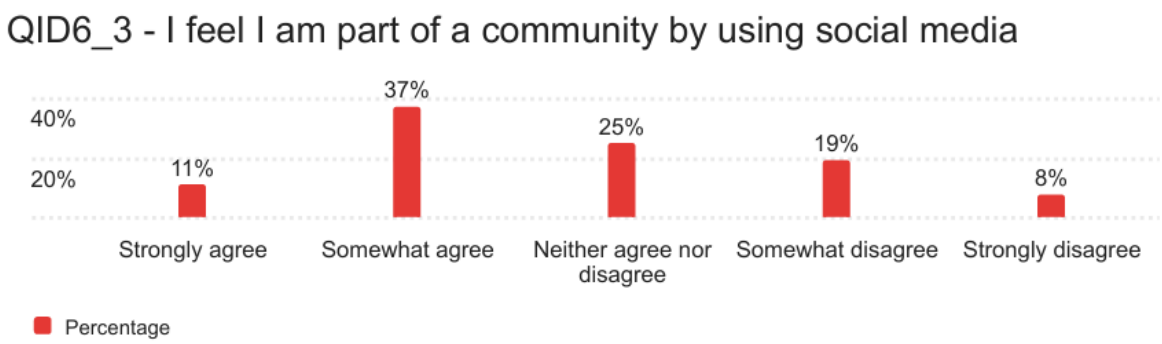
- **Slightly more respondents feel out of touch**

Responses varied when parents were asked whether they feel out of touch when they are not using social media, with slightly more parents stating they feel out of touch when not using social media. In total, 34% (213) somewhat agree and 10% (63) strongly agree. In comparison, 21% (128) somewhat disagree, and 10% (63) strongly disagree that they feel out of touch when using social media. A further 25% (153) neither agree nor disagree.

2.14 I feel I am part of a community by using social media. Agree or disagree?

- **Respondents agree**

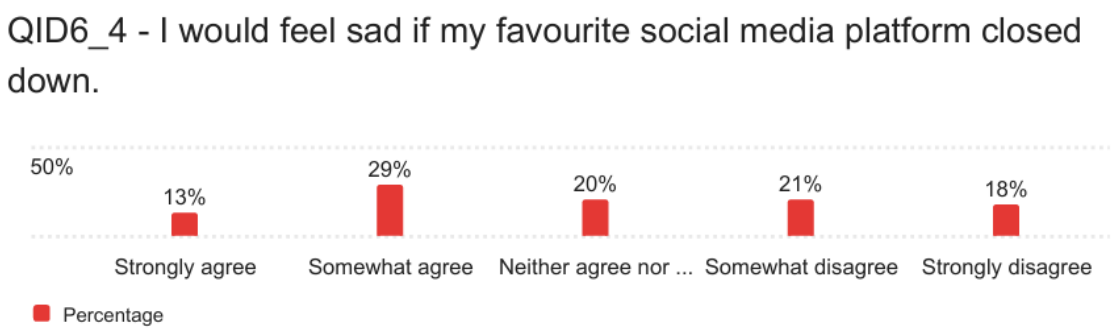
More parents agree (48%) than disagree (27%) that social media makes they feel part of a community. In total, 37% (231) somewhat agree and 11% (68) strongly agree that social media makes them feel like they are part of a community. In comparison 19% (118) somewhat disagree and 8% (47) strongly disagree that social media makes them feel part of a community. A quarter of respondents, 25% (155) neither agree nor disagree.



2.15 I would feel sad if my favourite social media platform closed down. Agree or disagree?

- **Slightly more would feel sad**

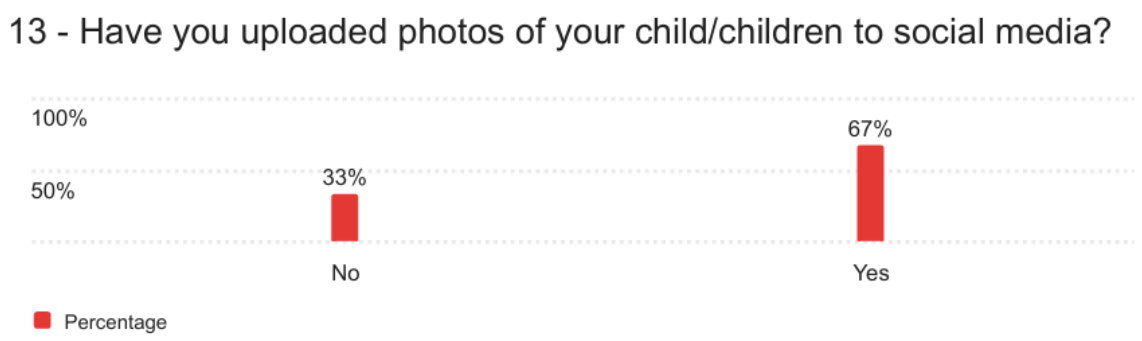
When parents were asked whether they would feel sad if their favourite social media platform closed, results were fairly evenly spread, although the findings indicate that most parents would feel sad. In total 42% (299) agree they would feel sad – 29% (231) somewhat agree and 13% (68) strongly agree. In comparison, 39% (165) said they would not be sad, with 21% (118) somewhat disagreeing and 18% (47) strongly disagreeing they would feel sad if their sad if their favourite social media platform closed. A fifth of respondents, 20% (124) neither agree not disagree.



2.16 Have you uploaded photos of your child/children to social media?

- **Despite concerns, over two thirds of respondents upload photos of children**

Approximately two thirds of parents 67% (416) said they have uploaded photos of their children to social media, compared to 33% (205), who said they had not.



2.17 How often do you upload photos of your child/children to social media?

Of the parents who have uploaded photos of their children to social media, the majority 60% (220) state the frequency is only occasionally and a further 28% (101) say it is once in a while. Just 11% (40) of respondents upload photos once a week, and 2% (6) said they upload photos of their children daily.

2.18 Social media makes me feel disconnected. Agree or disagree?

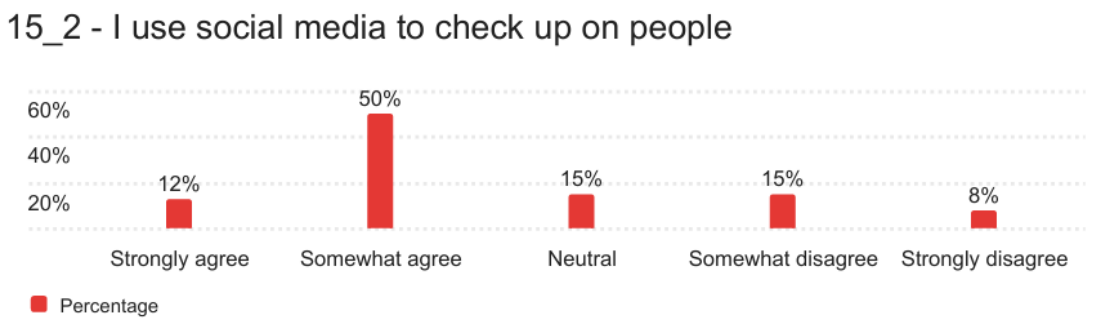
- **Respondents do not feel disconnected**

When parents were asked if social media makes them feel disconnected, slightly more parents disagree 42% (231) than agree 29% (163). In total, 32% (176) somewhat disagreed and 10% (55) strongly disagreed. In comparison 25% (139) somewhat agreed and 4% (24) strongly agreed. Over a quarter of respondents, 28% (152) were neutral.

2.19 I use social media to check up on people. Agree or disagree?

- **Social media is used to check up on people**

Many parents say they use social media to check up on people. Half of respondents, 50% (274) somewhat agree and 12% (68) strongly agree that they use social media to check up on people. A further 15% (81) somewhat disagree and 8% (42) strongly disagree that they use social media to check up on people. Of the respondents, 15% (81) were neutral.



2.20 I use social media to find out about news, events, pop culture, information and/or current affairs. Agree or disagree?

- **Strong agree**

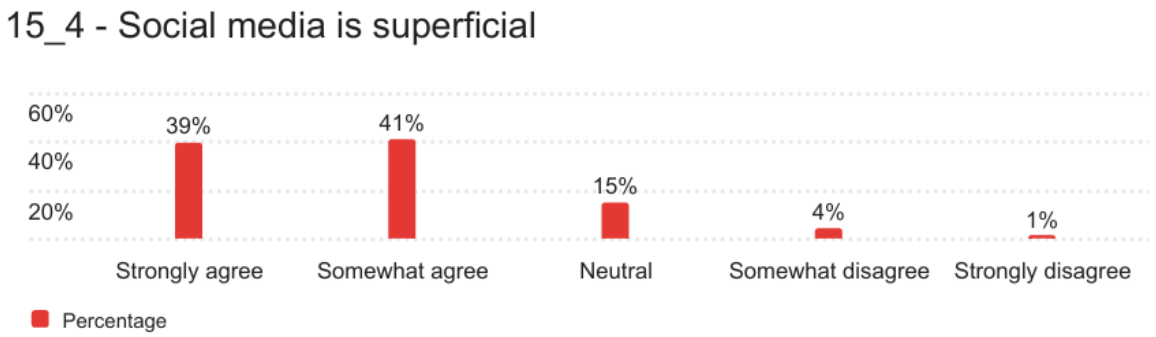
Over half of respondents 51% (277) somewhat agree and 39% (215) strongly agree that they use social media to find out about news, events, pop culture, information and/or

current affairs. Only 3% (16) somewhat disagree and 2% (9) strongly disagree. A further 5% (29) of respondents who were neutral.

2.21 Social media is superficial. Agree or disagree?

- **Strong agree**

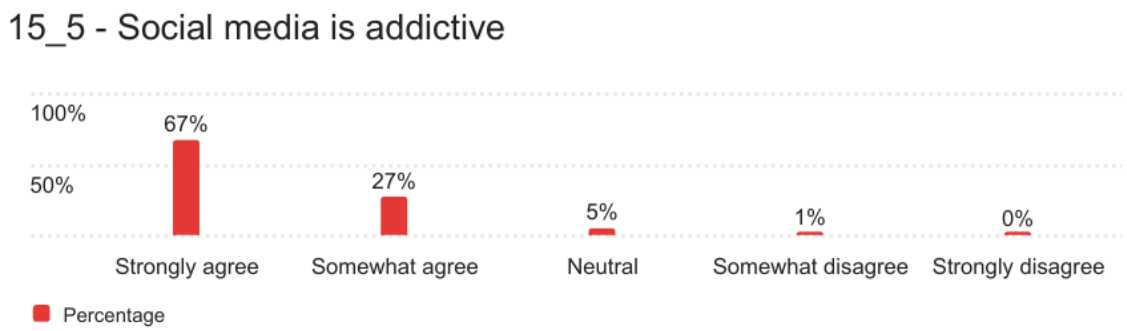
Most respondents agree that social media is superficial, with 41% (215) who strongly agree, and 39% (223) somewhat agree. Just 4% (22 parents) somewhat disagree and 1% (3) strongly disagree. A further 15% (82) were neutral.



2.22 Social media is addictive. Agree or disagree?

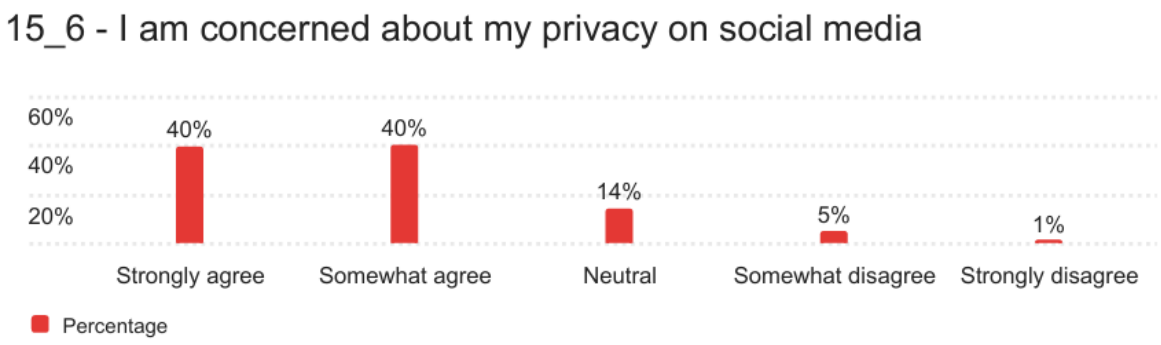
- **Respondents overwhelmingly believe social media is addictive**

A significant number of parents 67% (366) strongly agree and 27% (145) somewhat agree that social media is addictive. Just 1% (7) of parents somewhat disagree and one parent strongly disagree. A further 5% (27) were neutral.



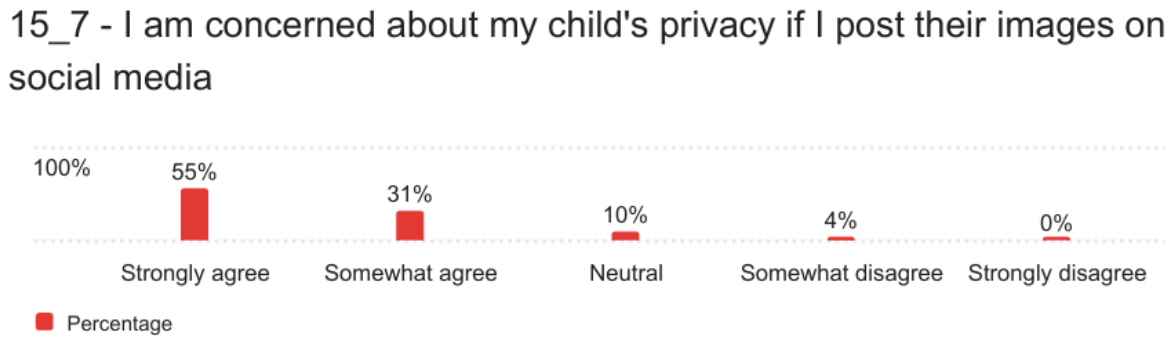
2.23 I am concerned about my privacy on social media

Respondents are concerned about their privacy on social media, as 40% (218) strongly agree and 40% (221) somewhat agree that they are concerned about their social media privacy. Just 5% (27) somewhat disagree and 1% (4) strongly disagree that they are concerned about their privacy on social media. Of the respondents, 14% (77) were neutral.



2.24 I am concerned about my child's privacy if I post their images on social media

Respondents are more concerned about their children's privacy if they post images on social media, compared to their own privacy. Of the respondents, 55% (300) strongly agree and 31% (170) somewhat agree that they are concerned about their children's privacy if they post their images on social media. Just 4% (21) somewhat disagree and a total of two parents strongly disagree that they are concerned about their children's privacy on social media. Of the respondents, 10% (54 parents) were neutral.



2.25 I waste too much time on social media. Agree or disagree?

- **Strong agree**

Parents agree that they waste too much time on social media, with 45% (255) strongly agreeing and 36% (195) somewhat agreeing. Just 6% (30) somewhat disagree and 1% (8) strongly disagree. A further 13% (69) were neutral.

2.26 Besides family and friends, who do you follow on social media? Please tick all that apply.

- **Retail outlets and parenting influencers**

Parents were then asked to state who they follow on social media, beside family and friends. Parents could choose all that apply and 552 respondents answered the question. The most commonly followed by parents are retail outlets 56% (309) and parenting influencers 53% (291), followed closely by WA forums such as Buggy Buddies 46% (253), news outlets 42% (231), parenting writers such as Maggie Dent or others 41% (228), social media influencers 34% (189), children's education and entertainment such as The Wiggles/ ABC Kids 34% (186). A comparatively lower 16% (87) said they only follow family and friends.

Parents were asked to provide examples in the categories of news outlets, parenting influencers, social media influencers, parenting writers, WA forums, and children's education and entertainments. The next section will break down the results provided.

2.26.1 Besides family and friends, who do you follow on social media? News outlets.

- **ABC most popular**

There were 370 news outlets noted. Some respondents misunderstood the question and wrote brands such as Woolworths and Coles. These responses were not recorded as they are not news outlets.

The most followed media outlet by parents is ABC with 21% of parents (77) stating they follow the ABC on social media. This was followed by 7 News with 8% (29), Perth Now 7% (26), 9 News 6% (24) and The Guardian 6% (22), SBS 5% (13), The West Australian 3% (11), BBC 3% (10), Al Jazeera 2% (9), Cheek Media 2% (8), and news.com.au 2% (7), The Daily Aus 2% (6), The Conversation (5) and Perth Weather (5) (both 1%).

A further 6% of parents (16) stated they follow 'local' or 'Perth' news without naming the news outlet.

Four responses were attributed to Sky News, 10 News, The New York Times, Shit You Should Care About, and Mamamia respectively, representing 1% of all responses.
International outlets that were chosen by less than 1% of respondents were CNN (2), Middle Eastern Eye (2), Atlantic (2), Hebrew news outlets (1), Irish Times (1), ESPN (1), Fox (1), Straits Times (1), and Channel News Asia (1).
Australian news outlets chosen by less than 1% of respondents were WAToday (3), The Australian (2), Sunrise (2), Albany Advertiser (2), Xpress (1), Daily Telegraph (1), Australian Financial Review (1), Sydney Morning Herald (1) National Indigenous Times (1), South West Times (1), Geraldton Guardian (1), Business News (1), Hack (1) and Crikey (1).
Satirical publications the Bell Tower Times (2) and Betoota Advocate (1) were also listed.
Others listed by one person included unspecific categories such as radio, politicians, podcast, TV, fitness, news, national news, and international news.

2.26.2 Besides family and friends, who do you follow on social media? Parenting influencers

- **Dr Kyla and Its Mandagram most popular**

Respondents were asked to specify their favourite or other parenting influencers they follow on social media and 381 responses were recorded.
The most popular parenting influencers with 6% of overall responses each were Dr Kyla, (24) and Its Mandagram (23). Big Little Feelings (17) and Nicole Kids Physio (17) each had 4% of overall responses.
The other most popular parenting influencers were Maggie Dent 3% (8), Perth Localite 3% (8), Boob To Food 2% (6), Perth Mums Who 2% (6), Brat Busters 1% (5), and Good Morrells 1% (4).
Gee Bungalow, Peds Doc Talk, Dr Golly, and Babies of Perth each had 1% (3 responses).
Not all responses specified a particular influencer and instead focused on the types of accounts they like to follow. In total,15% of responses (59) listed general topics they like to follow. Of these, the most common were activity ideas (4) and parenting in Perth

(4). The next most popular topics were parenting neurodivergent children (3), recipes (3), and occupational therapy (3).

The topics parents like to follow fall into three main categories; health, parenting, and entertainment. Health topics include paediatricians, physiotherapists, parenting with mental health, ADHD mums, and natural healing. Parenting topics include breastfeeding, playgroup, gentle parenting, raising toddlers, cloth diapers, stay at home mums, and baby led weaning. Entertainment topics include craft, fun, fashion, TikTok, and parents 'whinging' about families.

2.26.3 Besides family and friends, who do you follow on social media? Social media influencers

- **Its Mandagram, Shawna the Mom, and Jen Hamilton most popular**

Respondents were asked to specify their favourite or other social media influencers they follow on social media and 179 responses were recorded. Of these, 19% (34) did not name a specific influencer but instead listed a topic. The most common topics were food-related (5), and craft including sewing and embroidery (5), gardening (2), news (2), beauty (2) and comedy (2). Other topics include Christian content, camping, deaf-related content, history, music, science, sports and fitness.

There was some overlap with parenting influencers and social media influencers. The most popular social media influencers were Its Mandagram (3), Shawna the Mom (3), and Jen Hamilton (3) each followed by 2% of respondents. Diary of a Ceo (2), Charlotte Dobre (2), Dr Kyla (2), Nicole Kids Physio (2), Perth Localite (2), Supermarket Swap (2), and Tanya Hennessy (2) were each followed by 1% of respondents.

2.26.4 Besides family and friends, who do you follow on social media? Parenting writers

- **Maggie Dent most popular**

Respondents were asked for their favourite parenting writers such as Maggie Dent or others and 217 responses were recorded. Of these, 3% (6) did not name a specific writer, but instead listed a topic. These topics were autism and ADHD, dance, raising children, neurodiversity, birth, and attachment parenting.

Of the writers listed, Maggie Dent was overwhelmingly the most popular parenting writer with 46% (100) of responses. Other popular parenting writers were Dr Justin Coulson 4% (9), Dr Kyla 3% (7), Dr Becky 3% (6), Dr Billy Garvey 2% (5), and Nicole Kids Physio 2% (4).
Steve Biddulph (3), Tiny Hearts (3) Pop Culture Parenting (3), and Lael Stone (3), had 1% of responses each.

2.26.5 Besides family and friends, who do you follow on social media? WA Forums

- **Buggy Buddies most popular**

Respondents were asked to list WA Forums they follow such as Buggy Buddies. 228 responses were recorded. Of these, 10% (22) did not name a specific forum but instead listed a topic. These topics were focused on community and events, including libraries, playgrounds and activities, (12), health, including neurodiversity, ADHD and autism (3), parenting and birth (2).
Of the forums listed, Buggy Buddies was the most popular WA forum with 38% (86) of the responses .The next most popular WA forums were Playgroup WA 10% (22), Perth Mums 6% (13), Perth is ok 4% (9), Its Mandagram 3% (7), and Babies of Perth 2% (5). Buy Nothing (3), and Clean cloth nappy (3), each had 1% of responses.

2.26.6 Besides family and friends, who do you follow on social media? Children's education and entertainment

- **The Wiggles and ABC most popular**

Respondents were asked to list children's education and entertainment such as The Wiggles, ABC Kids they followed on social media, and 209 responses were recorded. Of these, 8% (17) did not name a specific educator or entertainer but instead listed a topic. These topics were focused on locations (11), toys (4), or platforms (2). Locations included zoos, museums and sporting events; toys included Lego, books and blocks; and platforms listed were YouTube and Netflix.
The Wiggles and ABC Kids were the most popular children's education and entertainment providers. The Wiggles received 22% (45) of the responses. ABC Kids also received 22% (45) of the responses.

Also popular were Bluey 11% (22), Ms Rachel 6% (13), Ms Moni 3% (6), Emma Memma 3% (6), Super Simple Songs 1% (3) and Disney 1% (3).

2.27 What are the positives of social media?

- **Two main themes: Connection and information**.

Parents were asked to describe the positives of social media. A total of 432 separate responses were recorded and coded for themes. The most common words used by parents were 'connection' and 'information'. The terms connect, connecting or connection were used in 29% of responses (126 times) by parents. The words info, informed or information were used in 14% of responses (61 times) by parents. However, these were broad categories and the information was analysed and separated into further subcategories.

Connection with family and friends. In total 21% (92) specifically stated a benefit of social media was keeping in contact with family or friends. Examples of these comments were '*Keeping connected to friends and family. Particularly those overseas*' or '*I can communicate with my husband who works FIFO, my parents and family living overseas. My kid loves seeing his grandparents on video calls'*.

Events and activities. Keeping track of events and activities were viewed as a strong benefit of social media. A total of 15% (63) respondses referred to the benefit of discovering or planning events and activities on social media. Examples of these types of responses were '*I can easily access ideas on fun activities to do with my child or events that may interest us'* and '*Many local events and programs are broadcast on social media, including school and shire events'*. Three responses specifically mentioned the need to use social media in relation to their child's school. One respondent stated '*... have to read about classroom information from the teacher online. As a parent you are "forced" into using it.'*

Support. A further 3% (13) specifically mentioned the benefit of using social media to gain support. An example of these comments was '*Support groups over the years from Breastfeeding, baby wearing, ASD and ADHD support groups*' and '*Being able to find relevant support outside your immediate network of friends and family*'.

Parenting advice. As previously mentioned, using social media to get information was a key theme across many responses. In total 7% (29) said they find social media is beneficial to obtain parenting tips and advice. Examples of these kinds of responses were *'I get parenting tips, some suggestions from the algorithm are helpful for my child's stage of development'* and '*special needs parenting help in videos and posts'*.

News and current events. Also in relation to information, 6% (25) specifically mentioned keeping up or being informed with news and current events as a benefit of social media. An example of these types of responses were '*I can keep up with independent media and be informed of current news'* and '*I feel like I know what is happening in the world and current events.'*

Ease and speed. The 'ease' of using social media was mentioned in 6% (25) of responses. Example of these responses were '*Connect easily to with other people*' and '*Easy to access information that is timely and usually relevant and useful'*. The speed of social media was also mentioned as a benefit. The word 'quick' was used in 1% of responses (6). An example of these was '*Helps people stay connected and share information quickly'*

Recipes. A further 4% (16) of responses were related to finding information about food and recipes. An example of these responses was '*I follow a lot of cooking pages/influencers and get lots of recipe inspiration'*.

Buying, selling and donating. Respondents benefited from the commercial aspect of social media, with 4% (18 responses) discussing the ability to buy, sell or donate items online. An example of these comments was '*Sell items no longer need but too expensive to just gift eg pram'* and *'Finding out about new products/ shops'*. Three of these responses specifically mentioned Facebook Marketplace as a positive of social media.

Business. Promoting businesses was also a positive, mentioned by 3% (12) of respondents. Examples of these responses were '*It's great for advertising our business and finding people in our local community that need work to'*.

Entertainment and fun. A further 3% **(**13) mentioned enjoyment, entertainment and fun as a benefit of social media. An example of these types of comments were 'Have a form of entertainment everywhere I go' and 'I also just like to watch funny videos!' One respondent said social media was '*downtime for my brain'*.

Curation and the algorithm A small number of respondents 1% (5) spoke positively of social media's algorithm and curated content. An example of this response was *'Curated feed. Don't have to find the articles of interest, they come to me'* and *'I actually like my algorithm, which has learned that I am mostly interested in light-hearted websites'*.

2.28 Are there any downsides? If yes, please specify what these are.

Two main themes: 'Addiction' and fuelling comparison culture

When respondents listed the downsides of social media most mentioned more than one downside. An example of these responses was **'***Addiction and doom scrolling and self worth'* and *'Addiction. Confirmation bias. Misinformation and disinformation. Malicious intent. Bullying.'* These responses suggest parents have complex feelings of dissatisfaction towards social media and feel there are multiple negative impacts with its use. A total of 469 separate responses were recorded and coded for themes.

'Addiction'. Social media's perceived addictiveness was recorded across 26% (120) responses. Example of these responses were '*Addictive, people will often stop a conversation to scroll*' and '*It can be addictive and sometimes I find myself on it when I should be spending time with my child'*.

Comparison *culture*. A further 11% *(*53 responses) discussed comparison as a downside of social media. Respondents discussed comparing themselves and their lives with others' 'highlight reels'. Examples of these comments include *'it becomes easily overwhelming and can triggers thoughts of comparison and worry'* and '*being a mum and seeing these influencers getting skinny postpartum and living this expensive lifestyle..it creates a false narrative that this is what being a young mum is like..it's not, and if you're not keeping up with the Jones you're not a good mum'*. *And 'Makes you feel like everyone's life is better than yours'*

Timewasting. In total, 10% (47) spoke of time wasting as a downside of social media. Examples of these comments were **'***Time wasted that could be spent on catching up with my husband, mental health practices or exercise, more wholesome entertainment'*. *And 'Black hole of time'*.

Effects on parenting and children. There were 5% (25) of respondents who mentioned the effects on their parenting. Examples of these comments were *'How much time I*

spend on it-it takes away from my children' and 'poor role modelling to children who try to speak to you and get attention.'

Doomscrolling. In total 4% **(**21) mentioned doomscrolling as a negative aspect of social media. An example of this is *'definitely the doom and mindless scrolling'*.

Disconnection. In the survey, *4% (*20) spoke of feeling disconnected after using social media. An example of this was *'False sense of being connected but realistically we are more isolated then ever'*

Fake. There were 4% (20) who mentioned the word 'fake' or mentioned the lack of authenticity in their responses. Respondents referred to fake news, fake representation of lifestyles and fake people. An example of these comments is *'Fake news - not trustworthy even actual news pages aren't always accurate' and 'everything feels heavily curated and censored and nothing feels authentic'*.

Advertising. A further 4% (18) discussed advertising as a downside of social media. An example is '*Content shown is usually influencers, news outlets and advertising rather than content shared by family/friends*.' Some responses mentioned materialism, such as '*it encourages materialism'*. Some respondents feel pressured to purchase items and were suspicious of the targeted advertising 'There are ads and it is creepy how targeted they are at you.'

AI. A total of 3% (14) of the respondents said that AI was a downside of social media. Examples of these comments were *'I have posted 1 photo of my daughter announcing her arrival into the world. I will not post her again, it is not a safe place for children to be. Especially since AI.'*

Safety and scams. In the survey, 3% (12) mentioned online safety in general aside from bullying. An example of these posts was *'I don't like sharing actual things about my life because it doesn't feel safe'*.

Privacy. In the survey, 2% (11) mentioned a lack of privacy as a downside of social media**.** An example of these posts was *'lack of privacy, unsure how I'm being tracked and how that data is used/sold'* and '*Your privacy is not respected by the social media platforms.'*

Bullying. In the survey, 1% *(*7) mentioned bullying and cyberbullying as a downside of social media. Examples of these comments were *'I am worried about cyber bullying*

when my kids are older' and '*Anonymous posting can lead to people being nasty to each other. Bullying is very easy online'*.

FOMO. In the survey, 1% (5) referred to FOMO and the fear of missing out. An example of these comments is 'Feel like children are missing out if they don't have what other kids do- material'.

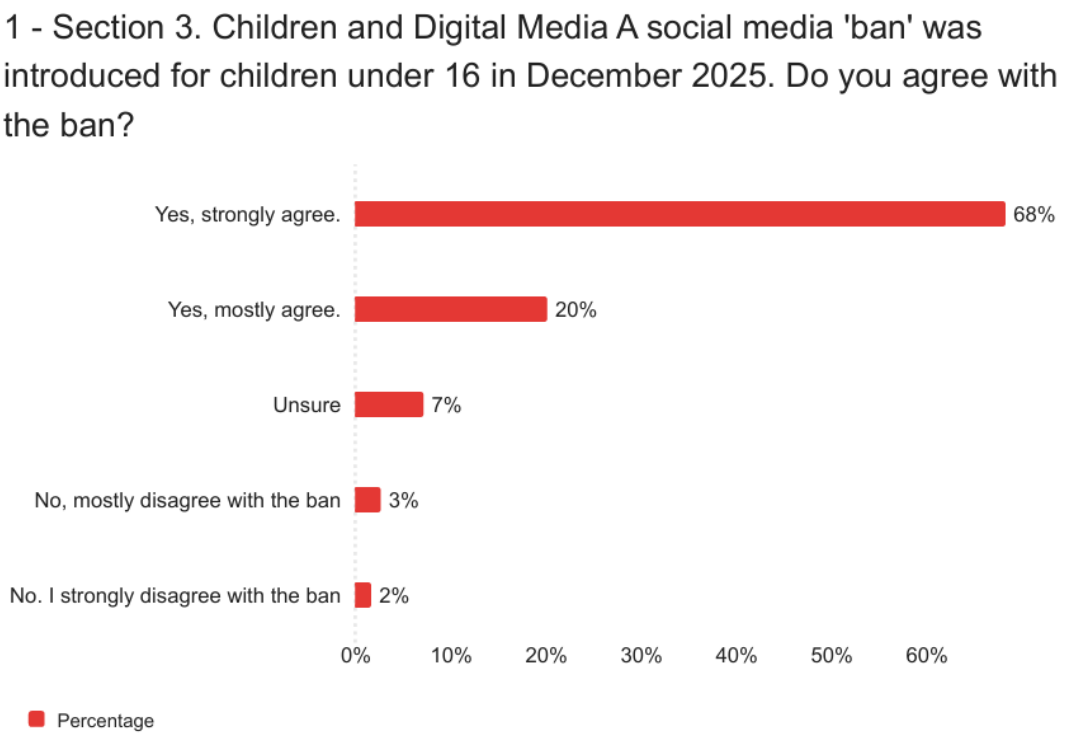
Section 3. Children and Digital Media

3.1 A social media 'ban' was introduced for children under 16 in December 2025. Do you agree with the ban?

- **Strong support for the social media ban.**

Respondents were asked if they agreed with the Australian social media ban introduced for children under 16 in December 2025. A total of 68% (363) strongly agreei, and 20% (107) mostly agree with the ban.

Just 3% (14) mostly disagree with the ban, and 2% (9) strongly disagree with the ban, and 7% (38) of parents were unsure.



3.2 Reasons for supporting the ban.

The survey responses suggested there are six key reasons parents support the social media ban. These responses are that the ban is needed due to concerns around children being 'immature, vulnerable and impressionable' (41); bullying (33), concern for brain development (23); online predators (23); addictive (22); and self-image and self-esteem issues (11).

3.2.1 'Immature, vulnerable, impressionable'. There were 41 responses that discussed the social media ban being necessary to protect children, framing them as immature, vulnerable and impressionable. An example of these comments is '*Children are a vulnerable group within our community - have free access to a huge range of influences that are not policed or filtered, negative influence'* and '*Children have not yet developed the skills to use social media maturely, just like consent (age 16) and alcohol/drinking age (18)'*.

3.2.2 Bullying. There were 33 responses that mentioned the ban being useful to stop bullying. Examples of these comments were ***'****Children are exposed to too many things not meant for them, it allows bullying to follow them home from school or just random strangers'* and '*I think online bullying is a concern and the use of social media to segregate or intimidate impressionable teens'*.

However, two of the responses opposed to the ban took the view that bullying has always existed, and a social media ban will not prevent it from happening. An example of these comments is '*I think online bullying (and before that in person bullying) has always been around. It feels like a band-aid solution and a way to slow down actual education'*.

3.2.3 Concern for brain development. There were 23 responses that mentioned the brains of children still developing. An example of these comments were *'Brain development indicates their brains are not mature enough to monitor and control their own usage.. Adults aren't even good at it!'* and '*I already feel my brain turned to mush and I didn't have access to social media from such a young age!! Just don't think it's good for their developing brains'*.

3.2.4 Online predators. There were 23 responses that mentioned the social media ban limiting the reach of online predators. An example of these comments were **'**it (the social media ban) is beneficial in order to protect our children from online predators'

and ‘As a child who grew up during the explosion of social media, I have first handed my experienced how predators can access children and teenagers and at the time it just seemed funny and normal’,

3.2.5 Addictive. A further 22 responses said the addictiveness of social media was a reason to support the ban. An example of these responses were ‘*As an adult I work hard at not letting social media negatively influence me or become addicted to it, it is so much more difficult for a child to have those same levels of understanding’* and ‘*I am a high school teacher and I see the impact and addiction every day in my classroom.’*

3.2.6 Self image and self-esteem. A total of 11 responses mentioned the negative effects of social media on children’s self-image and self-esteem. An example of these comments were ‘*I think it brings children a poor perception of their self-image (complex with their body, their look because all they see it is beautiful people, rich, surgery, etc) and a completely inappropriate idea of real life.’* And ‘*Adults find it hard to deal with the fake imagery and expectations, let alone children. It's the beauty magazines that made us feel crap about ourselves as teenagers on steroids!’*

3.3 Reasons for opposing the social media ban

The survey responses suggested there are five key reasons parents oppose the social media ban. These responses are that the ban is ineffective due to loopholes (15); leads to solation/lack of connection (9); removes parental responsibility to monitor and teach social media use (9); is governmental overreach (8); and causes children to miss out on positives of social media and decreasing their digital literacy (5).

3.3.1 The ban is ineffective due to loopholes. There were 15 responses that mentioned the ban is ineffective as children and teenagers are finding a way to still access social media. *‘from conversation with families with older kids, there are too many loopholes about the ban that need to be strengthened, including some of the excluded games which I have heard can be quite harmful’,* and ‘*it was obvious teens would get around it via VPNs/older siblings face ID/fingerprints.’*

3.3.2 Isolation/lack of connection. 9 responses mentioned the isolation and inability to freely communicate that children will experience as a result of the social media ban. Examples of these responses were ‘*there are so many children struggling with*

connection and community and find that online' and *'Connection with international family shouldn't be restricted'*.

3.3.3 Parental responsibility to monitor and teach social media use. 9 responses suggested that it is a parent's role to monitor and teach responsible social media use, rather than a government responsibility. Examples of these responses were '*It is parent/family responsibility to keep young people off social media and teaching media literacy. The ban was EXTREMELY poorly managed*' and '*I personally feel equipped to manage this area with my children and would prefer the opportunity to do so myself when I see fit.'*

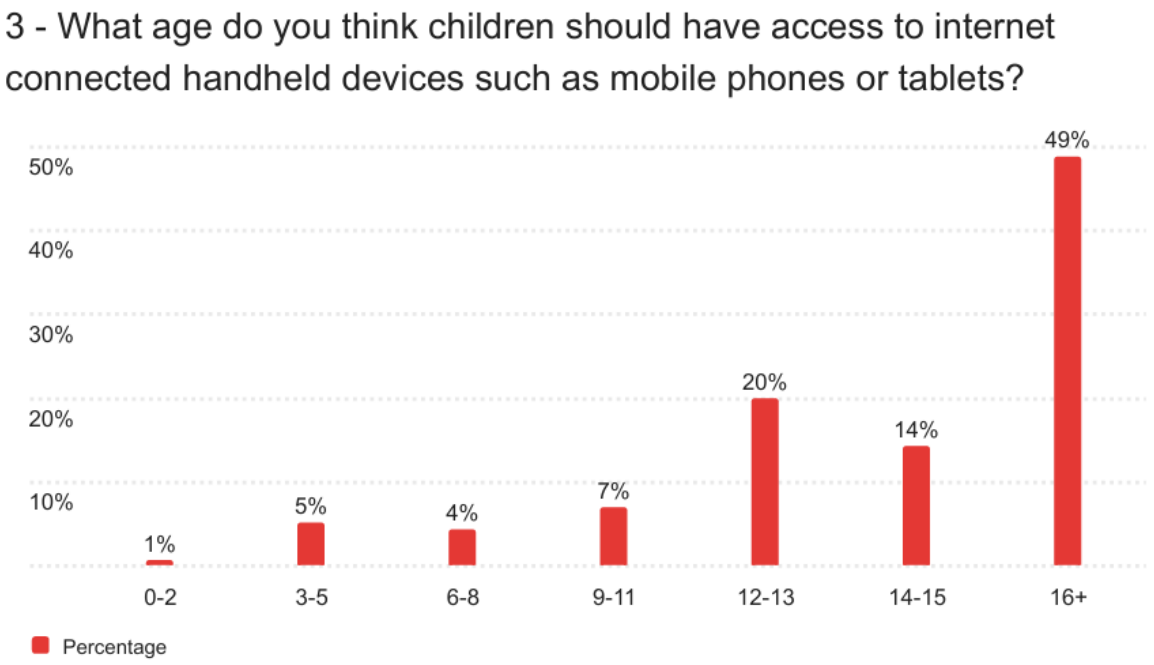
3.3.4 Government suspicion/overreach. 8 responses mentioned government overreach and suspicion about digital ID as a reason for not supporting the ban. Examples of these responses were *'This is governmental control masked as care'*. And *'Because the ban is not to protect children it is more a part of pushing forward the digital ID'*

3.3.5 Children missing out on positives of social media and decreasing their digital literacy. 8 responses said they were concerned about the positive aspects of social media that children and now missing out on. Examples of these responses were *'A complete ban means they can't access the good things on social media'* and *'I think YouTube can have helpful or informative advice'* and *'Banning access may hinder opportunities for learning about digital literacy and responsible online behavior, essential skills in today's digital world'*.

3.4 What age do you think children should have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets?

- **Almost half of respondents feel 16 and over is the best age**

Almost half of responses, 49% (259) said age 16 and over is the best age for children to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets. A further 20% (106) of responses believe children aged 12 – 14 is the best age; 14% (76) said children aged 14 – 16; 7% (37) said aged 9 – 11; 5% (27) said aged 3 – 5; 4% (23) said aged 6 – 8; and just 1% (3) said aged 0 – 2.



3.5 Reasons for responses to best age for children to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets

Aged 0 – 2. Of the 3 respondents who chose 0 – 2 as the best age to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets, the responses focused on the positives of social media, including education. The three responses were *'Kids start to learn things at an early age. We used a tablet for plane rides and car rides just to kill time. We only put educational apps on like abc kids and Khan academy kids. Our sanity was saved!!'*

and

'The internet and devices can be super educational and the world we live in is technology driven and they need to learn from a young age but under strict parental guidance'

and

'don't mind giving my 2yr old child a device when I select the show they can watch and supervise. Beyond this, I cant say how I will feel, I think it's important they learn technology from a young age but how to moderate it I don't know'

Aged 3 – 5.

Parents who responded the 3 – 5 age group as the best age to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets, largely focused on the educational aspects of specific platforms and applications. Examples of their responses were:

'*Abc iview is an internet streamed platform and we've found lots of educational tv shows for our kids on it'*

and

'I would have previously chosen 6-8 the reason i have chosen 3-5 is because i have a child with ASD who heavily used screens to regulate in social settings. We also travel long distance to visit family 2-day car trip, so screen time helps with that, my 3-year-old is not interested in iPad, so it really comes down to the individual child. I personally would prefer if my children didn't use screens at all but this is the world we live in and this is one of my supports as a mum supporting an ASD child. '

and

'The age I selected seems wild so let me clarify. My daughter is almost 4. She has supervised access to my tablet to use reading eggs and to watch tv shows or YouTube. It's minimal access, she can't just go get it and use it whenever she wants. I think that's acceptable use.

and

'Need caps and limits on it, only for songs/rhymes they access them anyway, use it for good ie learning'.

and

'There are some great online platforms for children that help encourage learning in a fun and interactive way.'

Aged 6 – 8.

Parents who responded the 6 – 8 age group as the best age to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets, largely focused on the educational aspects of specific platforms and applications and also the need for children to be digitally literate. Examples of their responses were:

'We are in a digital era so children need to learn how to use devices safely, having access to parents/family devices in small doses first before having their own.'

and

‘Under supervision. Its part of life in this age.’

and

‘My daughter loves discovering craft videos and following along, music videos’

and

There’s so many other things that young children can be doing. I think if it’s a device used as part of something else (eg to film things or record stories etc) the it’s ok, as is connecting with family via FaceTime etc. I think that having access to devices at this age is ok, but not unlimited time potentially even their own device at this age not ok.

and

Educational apps like reading eggs

Aged 9 – 11.

Parents who chose the 9 – 11 age group as the best age to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets, largely focused on the educational aspects of online applications and also the need for children to have access to a phone for physical safety. Examples of their responses were:

‘I don’t think they need before 10 to learn anything more than what you can get from analog and printed media. Learning about computers in a time limited setting and focused on it as a tool.’

‘*My daughter is a fact freak, she googles facts all the time. As encyclopaedias are big and bulky and expensive I’d rather she google than invest in a wall of physical books for every piece of info.’*

and

‘At around the age 9-11 young people begin to be able to decode information that is presented to them and with support can make more informed choices about what they are doing on the devices.’

and

Seems like at that age they would need access for school related things - research, study, etc. Also if kids and walking too and from school on their own at this age I would want them to have a phone to contact us as parents.

Aged 12 – 13.

Parents who chose the 12 – 13 age group as the best age to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets, discussed the need for children to have access to a phone for physical safety. Ideas of maturity and independence were also discussed. Examples of their responses were:

'*They need to be old enough to understand the boundaries and the reasoning and the consequences. I think at 12 you need to have access to devices for tech literacy especially in schools these days but I would still limit handheld device use for internet entertainment purposes.'*

and

'To communicate with parents as they travel to/from school alone.'

and

'My children will attend boarding school, therefore will require a phone.'

and

'They are old enough to understand'.

and

'By this age hopefully my children have enough maturity and education to be able to use devices safely. It is also likely that they will be more independent at this age and will need ways to contact parents.'

Aged 14 – 16.

Parents who chose the 14– 16 age group as the best age to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets, discussed children's growing maturity and independence. Some responses framed online media and devices as a fait accompli: an unavoidable part of contemporary life that parents felt unable to prevent. Examples of their responses were:

'You can't keep them away from it but need to educate strongly about the dangers'

and

I'd love to say 16+, but it feels like they will be missing out with their peers without it.

and

'At 14-15 years old, kids start to have more independence and responsibility. They travel to school and extra curriculars solo which means a genuine need to communicate.'

and

Old enough to talk to about the dangers of the internet

Aged 16+

Parents who chose the 16+ age group as the best age to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets, provided many negative aspects of social media. The responses to these questions were similar to the responses to the question asking parents to provide their reasons for supporting the ban. For example, 12 responses said the reasons for their response were due to the addictive nature of social media and devices. Examples of these responses were '*Devices and social media are incredibly addictive for adults. To expect a child to navigate this is insane*.' And *'Addiction to devices and impact on psychological wellbeing'. And 'Its not good for them, too addictive, they aren't ready'*

Parents raised the issue of online predators and safety. Examples of these comments were *'It is very difficult to monitor as parents what sites they go to and too easy for predators to gain access to them when they are younger as they are much more easily influenced.' And 'Takes maturity to understand what is real, fake, manipulative, grooming'*.

Brain development was discussed as a reason for children 16 and over to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets. An example of this comment was *'Social media should not be for under 16 when their brains are still developing and time should be spent studying, with friends, hobbies or outside activities'*.

Responses again framed children as immature, vulnerable, and impressionable. Examples of these types of comments were *'It requires a level or maturity and self control that is not something children below the age of 16 or even older can manage in a healthy way. I even struggle as an adult.'*

Bullying was mentioned by parents who chose the 16+ age group as the best age to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets. However it was not mentioned as often as the question asking about their reason for supporting a social media ban. An example of a comment that mentioned bullying was *'Protect children from online bullying. Developmentally, we are too dependent on*

technology and children are losing their social and emotional skills and capacity for outdoor adventuring, learning and curiosity without instant gratification of a device'. Many respondents who chose the 16+ age group as the best age to have access to internet connected handheld devices such as mobile phones or tablets said there was a need for 'kids to be kids' or a variation of this sentiment. Examples of these comments were *'I just really agree to let kids be kids without the social media pressure. They won't miss it if they don't know what it is in the first place'* and '*Children should be outside playing, not sat inside on their devices. It doesn't reach them how to have healthy relationships with their peers and what healthy relationships look like*.' These responses were focused on the positive aspects of being offline and the negative aspects of technology. For example one respondent said '*I believe children should be bored (increased use of imagination). I want them to grow up reading books and learning without being stuck on an ipad.'*

3.6 What are your hopes for your child/children's digital future/s?

- **Optimism and Pessimism**

Despite the question asking for their hopes about their child/children's digital future/s, some people responded negatively, with one respondent saying that '*the genie is too far out of the bottle'*. One respondent wrote '*I feel pretty despondent. I hope for a more analogue future where we prioritise real world communication and experiences and treat the online realm with caution'*.

However, other respondents said they hoped their children could use the positive aspects of technology. For example, one respondent said, **'***I hope my children get to experience all the positive things about social media and the internet.'* Another respondent said they hope their children can '*use the internet for its benefits'*.

Six key themes emerged in the responses to their hopes for their children's digital futures: the ability to balance between the offline and online world, responsible use, safety, learning and creativity, concern about addiction and over-reliance, and caution over AI.

3.6.1 Ability to balance between the online and offline world

Many respondents said they would like their children to be able to use technology as a tool and to be able to continue offline hobbies, and in particular, outside/outdoor hobbies. A typical response was '*Being active! Out exploring, learning new things about the environment and hopefully from nonfiction type real books, rather than Google. Learning to use digital aids as a supporting instrument, rather than basing life around it.'* One respondent said they hope their children could *'still know how to write a letter and read a book that is not online.'*

Many respondents said they hope their children **limit time** on social media with one respondent saying they hope their children '*seldom use it'* and another said they want their children '*not to live on it'*.

3.6.2 Responsible use

Respondents said they hope their children will use technology responsibly, suggesting they would like their children to use social media deliberately, and with self-control. Example of these comments was **'***I also desire for them to develop a strong sense of digital responsibility, enabling them to make informed choices that foster their well-being and personal growth'*. And '*Responsible and respectful use'*

3.6.3 Safety

Many respondents said they hoped to be able to keep their children safe from cyberbullying, online predators, scams, and other inappropriate material. Examples of these comments were 'I hope to raise kids who are self aware enough to be safe online' and *'I hope to keep my child safe from bullying and predators'*.

A discernible theme from respondents was related to their children's digital footprints. Several respondents said they hoped their children's digital footprint was limited, and they were keen to keep their children's images and personal information contained. Examples of these comments were '*I hope their digital footprint is theirs and it's small.'* And *'I hope they make smart choices when it comes to sharing information and photos on the internet.'*

3.6.4 Learning and creativity

Respondents said they hoped social media would support their children's learning. An example of this was *'I hope they are able to use all this technology to learn so much more, as they have already so far*.' And '*Access to information to help him follow his*

interests and learn, ability to deepen and maintain important relationships. I hope we are able to scaffold and support healthy habits'.

A smaller but clear theme was the hope that their children would use technology to boost their creativity. Examples of these comments was ***'****Most of all, I want technology to empower their learning, creativity, and opportunities.'*

3.6.5 Concern about addiction and over-reliance

As in previous sections of the survey, there is repeated concern that children may become addicted or overly reliant on screens, social media, and technology. Some respondents said their children are able to avoid addiction to technology. One respondent wrote *'I hope for my children to be able to live their lives as "analogue" as possible, just as we did in the 90s - without a screen to mediate the way they experience the world. I realise the irony of me saying this is my hope - when I am as addicted as I am to my own phone.'* Another respondent said, succinctly, that they hope their child has 'no reliance on the phone'.

3.6.6 Caution over AI.

Respondents expressed scepticism or caution about the emergence of AI. Respondents said they hope AI can be contained and useful, rather than limiting their children's opportunities. Examples of these comments were *'I hope AI does not take away the opportunity for the next generation to learn by doing.'* And *'Hopefully they (humans) can still be the master of AI. But Elon Musk has predicted AI will totally dominate and decide most human decisions by 2030.'*

3.7 What are your concerns for your child/children's digital future/s?

Parents were clear in stating what they are concerned about in their children's digital futures. The five main themes that emerged were addiction, bullying, AI, safety, and body image and self-esteem.

3.7.1 Addiction

As with other areas of this survey, addiction emerged as a strong theme. One respondent wrote **'***Their resistance to relinquishing their devices after an "allowed" time slot indicates that they're already addicted even though they're all under age* 7'.

3.7.2 Bullying

As in previous sections of this survey, bullying/cyberbullying emerged as a key concern for parents. One parent wrote '*I will always hope they don't encounter bullying in any sense but knowing they probably will. I just hope I have done enough for them to come to me when they are in trouble.'*

Other responses to this question were **'***Bullying and ai generated images causing mental health issues'* and '*bullying and sextortion'*.

3.7.3 AI

Artificial intelligence was a strong theme for parents concerned about their children's digital futures. One respondent wrote 'AI is scary!". Other respondents said **'**I'm concerned that they will rely too heavily on AI and not be able to think for themselves' and 'Ai- not knowing what's real or false'.

3.7.4 Safety

Respondents said they were concerned their children would be exposed to online predators, scams, and other inappropriate material. One respondent wrote they are concerned their child will be '*hurt by something online'*. These responses reflect parents' difficulty in being able to monitor and control what their children view online. Examples of these comments were '*Access to illicit content or to people with malicious intents', 'Child exploitation and disgusting content'* and '*I'm concerned about my children's innocence being lost by others/peers exposing them inappropriate or harmful online content.'*

3.7.5 Body image and low self esteem

A less frequent but still notable theme was related to body image, self-worth and self-esteem. One respondent said they were concerned about the influence of **'***Ozempic celebrities, self-loathing body image issues'*.

Section 4. Parenting and the Media

4.1 What are the main sources you would get your health and wellbeing information from for yourself or your children? Please select all that apply.

- **Doctor and Google most popular**

Respondents were asked for their main source of information about health and wellbeing information for themselves of their children. They were asked to select all that applied, and there were 519 responses. The most common responses were doctor 78% (406), Google 66% (346), family 53% (275) and friends/peers 53% (275). Other responses were infant health nurse 43% (221), websites or forums 40% (206), books 36% (187), partner 32% (167), social media content creators or influencers 22% (112), AI 23% (119) and apps 8% (39). Of the respondents, 6% 30 chose 'other'.
Respondents who chose AI, social media content creators or influencers, apps, websites or forums and 'other', were asked to specify which specific sources they used. The following sections will describe their responses.

4.1.1 What are the main sources you would get your health and wellbeing information from for yourself or your children? I use AI (eg ChatGPT or similar). Please specify.

- **ChatGPT dominant**

In total, 5% (119) of respondents chose AI as sources of health and wellbeing information from for themselves or their children. Respondents were asked to specify these sources. There were 11 parents who misunderstood the question and said they used websites like Raising Children and Health Direct, or Facebook groups. One parent said they 'draw on old fashioned parenting advice'.
Of the remaining 47 responses who identified a specific AI platform, 74% (35) said they used ChatGPT. The remaining responses were Gemini (3), Google AI (2), CoPilot (2), Grok (1), Berry (1), Claude (1), Heidi (1), and Perplexity (1).

4.1.2 What are the main sources you would get your health and wellbeing information from for yourself or your children? Social media content creators/influencers. Please specify any key names.

- **Varied, but Dr Kyla most popular**

In response to the question about main sources of health and wellbeing information for yourself or your children**,** 5% (112) of respondents chose social media content creators or influencers. Respondents were asked to specify these sources and 123 responses were recorded.

The most common social media content creators or influencers as sources of health and wellbeing information for yourself or your children were Dr Kyla 14% (17), Nicole Kids Physio 8% (10), Tiny Hearts 8% (10), Maggie Dent 3% (4), Boob to Food 3% (4), Big Little Feelings 2% (3), Dr Becky 2% (3), Sick Happens 2% (3), and Western Kids Health 2% (3).

4.1.3 What are the main sources you would get your health and wellbeing information from for yourself or your children? Websites or forums. Please specify.

- **Raising Children's Network most popular**

In response to the question about main sources of health and wellbeing information for yourself or your children**,** 9% (206) of respondents chose websites or forums. Respondents were asked to specify these sources.

In total, 169 websites or forums were listed. The most common specific websites or forums as sources of health and wellbeing information for yourself or your children were Raising Children's Network 28% (47), Health Direct 9% (16), Reddit 9% (15), Royal Children's Hospital 5% (8), and Mayo Clinic 4% (6).

Some responses were general and unspecific, such as Facebook groups 7% (11), 'hospital' websites 4% (7), 'government' websites 3% (5), 'reputable' sources 2% (4), 'peer-reviewed' sources 1% (2) and Mum's groups 1% (1).

4.1.4 What are the main sources you would get your health and wellbeing information from for yourself or your children? Apps. Please specify.

- **Solid Starts most popular**

In response to the question about main sources of health and wellbeing information for yourself or your children**,** 2% (39) of respondents chose apps. Respondents were asked to specify these sources and 38 apps were recorded.

The most common apps as sources of health and wellbeing information for yourself or your children were Solid Starts 29% (11), Huckleberry 13% (5), Wonder Weeks 8% (3),

Instagram 8% (3), and 5% Lovevery (2), Storypark (2), Facebook (2), and Bright Tomorrows (2).

4.1.5 What are the main sources you would get your health and wellbeing information from for yourself or your children? Other. Please specify

- **Allied health professionals most popular**

In response to the question about main sources of health and wellbeing information for yourself or your children**,** 1% (30) of respondents chose 'other'. Respondents were asked to specify these sources, and 34 responses were recorded.

The most common 'other' sources of health and wellbeing information for yourself or your children, with 47% (16) responses, were allied health professionals including GPs, occupational therapists, naturopaths, and pharmacists.

Other sources of health and wellbeing information were personal intuition/knowledge 12% (4), podcasts 12% (4), Facebook groups 9% (3), friends 6% (2), school or school parents 6% (2) and a MLM company 3% (1).

4.2 Where do you get your news and current affairs from? Tick all that apply

Online sources preferred. Facebook dominant.

Respondents were asked to select all sources where they obtained news and current affairs. There were 519 responses to the question. The finding reveal most respondents get their news from online sources. The top three responses were online sources: 54% (279) of respondents get their news from Facebook, 52% (272) get their news from other news websites such as Perth Now (they were then asked to specify) and 28% (147) get their news from Instagram.

Other news sources were radio 25% (128), nightly TV news (101), news apps (74), podcasts (59), TikTok (53), local newspaper, either print or digital version 19% (45) parenting websites 7% (34), news emails 7% (34), daily newspaper print format 7% (34), and other social media 4% (22).

Of the respondents, 12% (60) chose 'other' and were then asked to specify. If respondents answered daily newspaper print format, online news websites, news apps, other social media, radio, podcasts, and news emails, they were asked to provide details. The findings are discussed below.

4.2.1 Where do you get your news and current affairs from? Daily newspaper print format

- **The West Australian chosen by 80% of respondents**

Of the 10 responses, 80% (8) chose The West Australian. One respondent chose Perth Now, and The Australian respectively.

4.2.2 Where do you get your news and current affairs from? Online news websites

- **Perth Now and ABC most popular**

Of the 283 responses, the most popular was Perth Now with 24% (68) of respondents selecting it as their news and current affairs source, online news website and ABC 22% (62).

The next most common online news websites were The Guardian 8% (24), 9 News 7% (19) BBC 5% (13), news.com.au 5% (13), 7 News 4% (11), WAToday 4% (10), SBS 3% (8), The West Australian 2% (6), 10 News 1% (3), Mamamia 1% (3), The Conversation 1% (3), The Daily Mail 1% (3).

A further 2% (6) said they use Google homepage or algorithm and 1% (3) said they use Facebook.

4.2.3 Where do you get your news and current affairs from? News apps

- **ABC most popular**

Of the 88 responses, the most popular news app was ABC with 50% (44) of respondents selecting it as their news and current affairs source. The next most popular apps were BBC 9% (8), The Guardian 7% (6), Apple News 6% (5), and 2% chose Al Jazeera (2), Daily Mail (2), The West Australian (2), and SBS (2),

4.2.4 Where do you get your news and current affairs from? Other social media

The responses in this section reflect a confusion between social media, and websites/news sites. Half (13) of the 26 responses mentioned sites such as 7 News, 9 News, Smart Investor, and Reddit as social media platforms.

Of the 13 remaining, the most common news and current affairs sources were YouTube (8). The remaining responses were BlueSky, Substack, Telegram, Whatsapp, and X (1 each).

4.2.5 Where do you get your news and current affairs from? Radio

Of the 124 responses, the most popular radio station as a news and current affairs source was ABC, with 19% (24) of responses.

Other radio sources were Triple J 15% (19), Mix 94.5 10% (13), Nova 93.7 9% (11), SonShine FM 98.5 8% (10), Triple M 92.9 8% (10), 96FM 6% (7), Coast FM 97.3 4% (5), 882 6PR 3% (4), and all 2% Wave FM 91.7 2(2), Curtin Radio (2), and RTR FM (2).

4.2.6 Where do you get your news and current affairs from? Podcasts

Of the 70 responses, the most popular podcasts as a news and current affairs source were ABC podcasts, with 13% (9) of responses.

Other podcasts as a news and current affairs source were The Quicky 6% (4), 7am 4% (3), Mamamia 4% (3), and Squiz 4% (3), and Candace Owens 3% (2), Daily Aus 3% (2), and Parenting Hell 3% (2).

4.2.7 Where do you get your news and current affairs from? News emails

Of the 35 responses, the most popular news emails as a news and current affairs source were ABC 11% (4), Perth Now 11% (4) and The Daily Aus 11% (4).

Other news emails as a news and current affairs source were The Conversation 9% (3), WAToday 9% (3), and The Guardian 6% (2) and The New Daily 6% (2).

4.2.8 Where do you get your news and current affairs from? Other

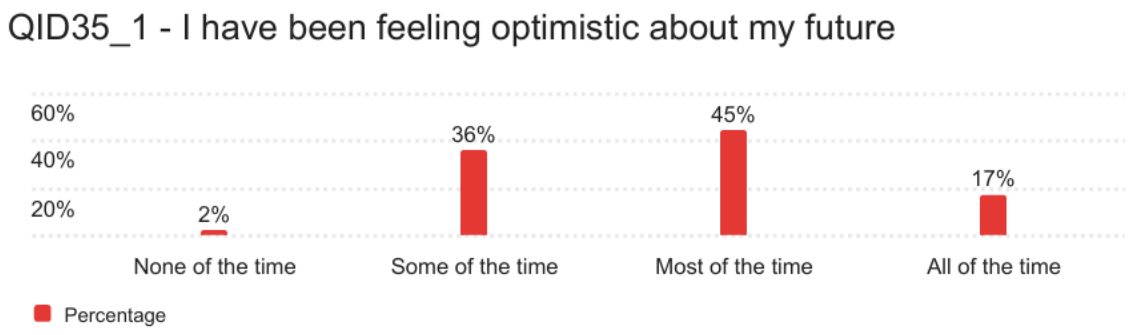
Of the 61 responses, the most common responses to people who chose 'other' as a news and current affairs source, were people stating they do not read or watch the news with 43% (26) of the responses recorded. Examples of these responses were '*News is depressing at the best of times, so I don't invest too much of my limited time in it'* and *'I don't follow the news as it makes me sad'*.

Other responses were husband or partner 25% (15), other family members or friends 15% (9), Google homepage 5% (3), and television news shows 5% (3).

4.3 I have been feeling optimistic about my future

- **Most are optimistic**

Almost half of respondents, 45% (228) feel optimistic about the future most of the time, and 17% (87) feel optimistic about the future all of the time. A further 36% (186) of respondents feel optimistic about the future some of the time, and just 2% (11) of respondents feel optimistic about the future none of the time.



4.4 I have been feeling useful

- **Most feel useful**

Half of respondents 50% (255) of respondents have been feeling useful most of the time, and 22% (113) all of the time. A further 27% (137) of respondents feel useful some of the time. Just 1% (7) of respondents feel useful none of the time.

4.5 I have been feeling interested in other people

- **Most are interested in other people**

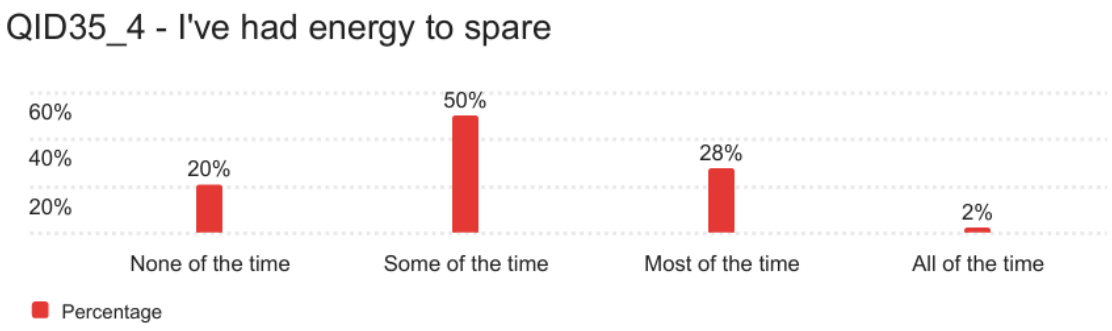
Almost half of respondents, 44% (227) feel interested in other people most of the time and a further 20% (101) all of the time. In total, 32% (132) of respondents feel interested in other people some of the time and 4% (22) of respondents feel interested in other people none of the time.

4.6 I've had energy to spare

- **Limited energy to spare**

Half of respondents (50%) (255) have energy to spare some of the time and 20% (104) of respondents say they have energy to spare none of the time.

In total, 28% (142) of respondents had energy to spare most of the time, and just 2% (11) had energy to spare all of the time.



4.7 I've been dealing with problems well

- **Slightly more than half are dealing with problems well most of the time.**

Over half, 55% (278) of respondents feel they are dealing with problems well most of the time or all of the time 5% (28).

A total of 38% (196) of respondents are dealing with problems well some of the time and 2% (10) are dealing with problems well none of the time.

4.8 I've been thinking clearly

- **Most are thinking clearly**

More than half of the respondents. 53%, (271) are thinking clearly most of the time. 11% (54) are thinking clearly all of the time.

A further 34% (176) of respondents are thinking clearly some of the time and just 2% (11) are thinking clearly none of the time.

4.9 I've been feeling good about myself

- **Half feel good about themselves most of the time**

Half of respondents, 50%, (257) feel good about themselves most of the time and a further 8% (41) feel good about themselves all of the time.

A further 37% (187) feel good about themselves some of the time, and 5% (27) feel good about themselves none of the time.

4.10 I've been feeling close to other people

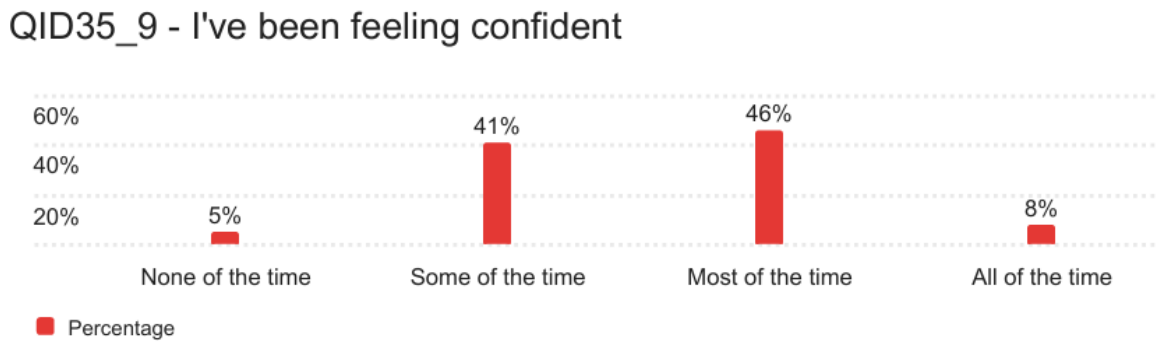
- **Almost evenly divided between some or most of the time**

In total, 42% (213) have been feeling close to other people most of the time and 13% (64) felt close to other people all of the time. A further 41% (212) of respondents have been feeling close to other people some of the time, and 4% (23) none of the time.

4.11 I've been feeling confident

- **confident most of the time**

In total, 46% (235) of respondents feel confident most of the time, and 8% (41) feel confident all of the time. A further 41% (210) of respondents feel confident some of the time, and 5% (26) none of the time.



4.12 I've been able to make up my mind about things

- **Majority able to make up mind about things most of the time.**

In total, 54% (274) of respondents are able to make up their mind about things most of the time, and 15% (78) all of the time.

A further 30% (153) of respondents are able to make up their mind about things some of the time, and 1% (7) none of the time.

4.13 I've been feeling loved

- **Majority feel loved most of the time**

In total, 40% (204) of respondents feel loved most of the time, and a further 6% (185) feel loved all of the time.

A further 21% (109) of respondents feel loved some of the time, and 3% (14) none of the time.

4.14 I've been interested in new things

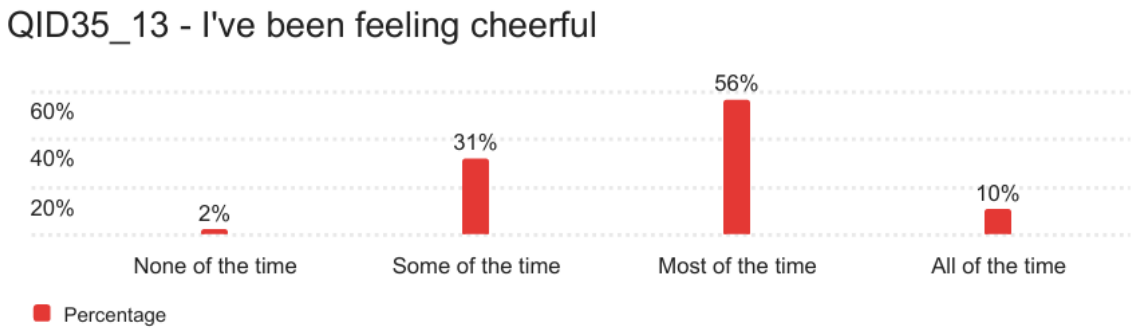
- **Most are interested in new things**

In total, 41% (209) are interested in new things most of the time, 35% (180) are interested in new things some of the time, 17% (86) all of the time, and 7% (37) none of the time.

4.15 I've been feeling cheerful

- **Most are feeling cheerful**

Over half of respondents, 56% (288) are feeling cheerful most of the time, while 10% (53) feel cheerful all of the time. A further 36% (161) are feeling cheerful some of the time and 2% (10) none of the time.



4.16 The people I care about make me feel that they care about me

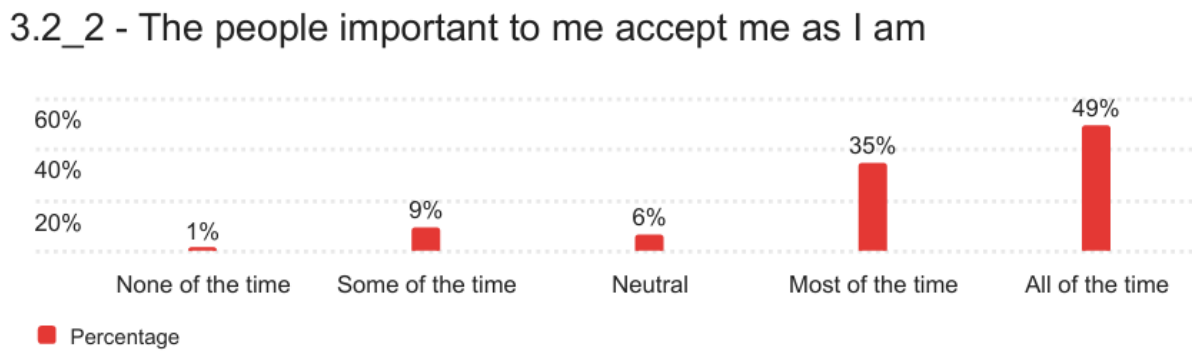
- **Most feel cared for**

Half of respondents, 50% (254) state the people they care about make them feel that they care about them most of the time, and a further 29% (146) feel it all the time.
A further 15% (75) feel the people they care about make them feel that they care about them some of the time and 1% (7) feel it none of the time.
Of the respondents, 6% (30) were neutral.

4.17 The people important to me accept me as I am

- **Most feel accepted**

Almost half, 49% (253) of respondents feel the people important to me accept me as they are all of the time, and a further 35% (178) feel it most of the time.
Just 9% (46) feel the people important to them accept thema s they are some of the time, while 1% (3) feel it none of the time.
Of the respondents, 6% (32) were neutral.



4.18 I enjoy the time I spend with the people who are important to me

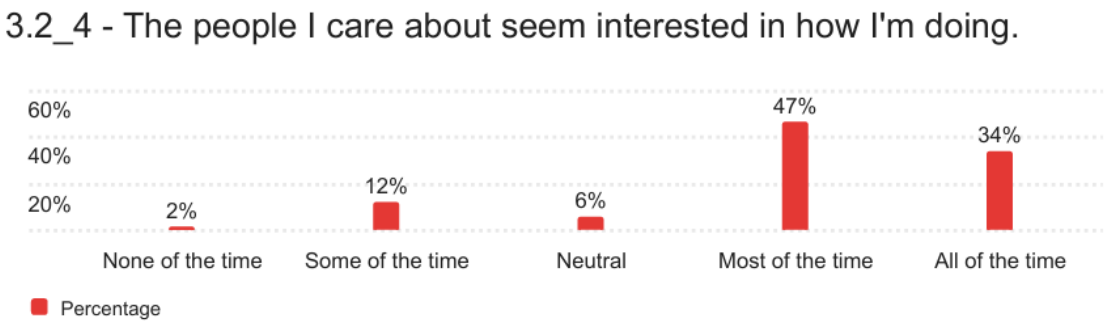
- **All of the time.**

Almost half, 48% (247) of respondents say they enjoy the time they spend with the people who are important to them all of the time. And a further 42% (215) feel it most of the time.
Just 7% (35) feel they enjoy the time they spend with the people who are important to them some of the time. and 0% (1 respondent) felt it none of the time.
Of the respondents, 3% (14) were neutral.

4.19 The people I care about seem interested in how I'm doing

- **Most of the time**

Almost half, 47% (239) of respondents say the people they care about seem interested in how they are doing most of the time and 34% (172) feel it all of the time.
A further 12% (62) say the people they care about seem interested in how they are doing some of the time, and 2% (9) feel it none of the time.
Of the respondents, 6% (30) were neutral.



4.20 The people I care about come through for me when I need them

- **Most of the time**

A total of 42% (216) of respondents feel the people they care about come through for them when they need them most of the time and a further 39% (199) feel it all of the time.

Just 12% (61) feel the people they care about come through for them when they need them some of the time and 1% (7) feel it none of the time.

Of the respondents, 6% (29) were neutral.

4.21 When something's on my mind, just talking with the people I know can make me feel better

- **Most of the time**

Almost half, 49%, (249) of respondents feel when something's on their mind, just talking with the people they know can make them feel better most of the time, with a further 34% (173) who feel it all of the time.

A further 10% (49) feel when something's on their mind, just talking with the people they know can make them feel better some of the time and 2% (8) feel it none of the time.

Of the respondents, 6% (33) were neutral.

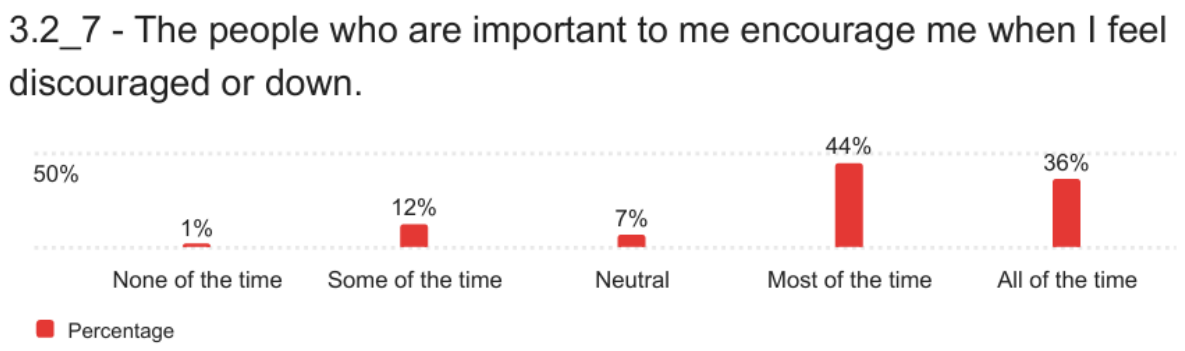
4.22 The people who are important to me encourage me when I feel discouraged or down.

- **Most of the time**

A total of 44% (227) of respondents feel the people who are important to them encourage them when they feel discouraged or down most of the time and 36% (185) feel it all of the time

Just 12% (60) of respondents feel the people who are important to them encourage them when they feel discouraged or down some of the time, and 1% (6) feel it none of the time.

Of the respondents, 7%, (34) were neutral.



4.23 I enjoy talking about everyday kinds of things with the people I care about.

- **Strongly positive.**

In total, 45% (232) of respondents enjoy talking about everyday kinds of things with the people they care about most of the time and 40% (203) feel it all of the time.

A further 9% (45) of respondents enjoy talking about everyday kinds of things with the people they care about some of the time, and 1% (5) feel it none of the time.

Of the respondents, 5%, (27) were neutral.

4.24 The people I know are good sources of useful information when I need it

- **Most of the time**

In total, 54% (274) of respondents feel the people they know are good sources of useful information when they need it most of the time. 24% (123) feel it all of the time.

A further 15% (75) of respondents feel the people they know are good sources of useful information when they need it some of the time and 0% (1) felt it none of the time.

Of the respondents, 8% (39) were neutral.

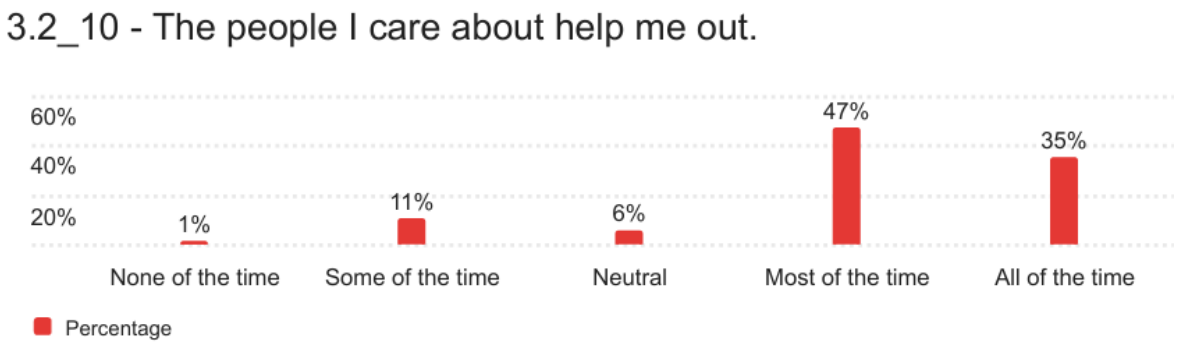
4.25 The people I care about help me out.

- **Strong positive**

Almost half, 47%, (241) of respondents feel the people they care about help them out most of the time, and 35% (180) feel it all of the time.

Just 11% (54) feel the people they care about help them out some of the time, and 1% (7) feel it none of the time.

Of the respondents, 6% (30) of respondents were neutral.



4.26 When I need someone to help me out, I can usually find someone.

- **Strong positive**

Almost half of respondents, 45%, (230) feel they can find someone to help them out when they need most of the time, and 34% (106) feel it all of the time.

Just 12% (61) of respondents feel they can find someone to help them out when they need someone some of the time, with 2% (10) none of the time.

Of the respondents, 7% (35) were neutral.

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