



# **New South Wales Post Election Survey Report**

April 2019



## Executive summary

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### **Almost three quarters chose to vote *for* a specific party or candidate at the NSW State election, rather than *against* one**

At the New South Wales State Election held on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019, one in five voters chose who to vote for based on a desire to not support other parties or candidates, whilst 72% voted for a party or candidate.

However, compared with the July 2016 Federal Election, when more voted *for* their preferred candidate (78%) than chose based on rejecting other candidates (16%), this reveals a less positive sentiment at the NSW election.

Rusted-on (always vote the same way) and older voters (aged 75+) were most likely to be motivated to vote *for* a candidate, while those making their decision in the final week of the campaign were most likely to choose a candidate as a protest vote (27%).

Coalition voters were significantly more likely to say they voted *for* the Liberal / Nationals (79%), while a third (34%) of other minor party and Independent voters say their vote was more a show of protest *against* other candidates than support *for* the candidates they chose.

### **Almost two thirds decided their own voting preferences, only a third used a ‘how to vote’ card**

This result is in line with the July 2016 Federal Election.

Among those who voted for the Greens, or other minor parties and Independents, eight in ten decided their own preferences (80% and 78% respectively). Among Coalition voters this was much lower (56%), with close to as many (43%) following ‘how to vote’ cards.

Overall, ‘how to vote’ cards were used most widely among rusted-on voters (83%).

### **Most voters cast their votes late in the campaign, a majority on election day itself**

Six in ten (61%) voted on election day, while a further three in ten (29%) voted in the final week of the campaign. Almost half of Nationals (46%) supporters voted in the final week, reflecting a higher use of pre-polling centres in regional areas.

Booth polling on election day (58%) or pre-poll centres (19%) – both in their own electorate - were the favoured ways to cast a vote, with less than one in ten (8%) opting to use iVote.



## Executive summary

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### **Two thirds decided who to vote for during the election campaign, one in four on election day itself**

This result is in line with the last Federal Election.

Late decision making was most common among voters for minor parties and Independents. Three quarters (76%) of these electors decided to vote this way *during* the campaign period, three in ten on election day (31%), highlighting the importance of campaigning all the way through to the close of booths on election day.

### **Party is key vote driver for Liberal, ALP and Greens voters, candidate for Nationals, and specific issues for others**

Half of Coalition voters (53%), say the Party is the most important factor in deciding who to vote for, higher than the NSW total (44%). Almost as many Labor (47%) and Greens (49%) voters agree.

Within the Coalition vote, and perhaps reflecting a city versus country difference, Nationals voters prioritise a candidate in their own electorate (44%).

Further, concerns about specific policies and issues drive support for other minor parties and Independent candidates – this is the most important factor among those who voted this way (43%).

### **Political, social, infrastructure and economic issues decided NSW votes but there were strong concerns about healthcare and hospitals and the environment and climate change**

This compares with health, economic and education issues being key factors at the last Federal Election.

Social issues, such as immigration and population growth, the need for honesty in politics, and leaders, were most important to one in five NSW voters (21%).

Infrastructure issues (19%) such as public transport, roads and stadiums, and economic issues (19%) such as Government spending and debt, living standards and costs and the state economy, were also key factors in how NSW voted.

Healthcare and hospitals (14%) and the environment and climate change (11%) were the dominant individual issues overall.

Voter priorities varied along political lines with infrastructure and economic issues most important in deciding the vote of Coalition voters (23% each), while health issues including hospitals and aged care were most important to Labor voters (23%). Environment, energy and water issues (46%) were the key factor for Greens voters by a wide margin ahead of political and social issues (32%).



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### **Voters were mostly critical in their evaluation of the NSW election campaign**

The campaign was predominantly viewed as the ‘same old stuff’ (59%), ‘forgettable’ (49%), ‘not engaging’ (48%) and ‘boring’ (45%).

This is similar to voter sentiment in the wash up of the 2016 Federal Election, which was also seen as too long.

### **The Coalition is seen to have run a more positive and less negative campaign than Labor and the Greens**

Overall, three in ten NSW voters (29%) say the Coalition ran a positive campaign, ahead of Labor (23%) and The Greens (19%). However four in ten or more viewed these campaigns as negative (40% LNP, 46% ALP and 43% Greens). This overall sentiment is in line with last Federal Election.

Among their own supporter base, the Greens’ and Coalition’s NSW campaigns were viewed much more favourably. Almost two thirds (65%) of Green voters thought the Greens campaign was positive, and six in ten (60%) Coalition voters thought the Coalition campaign was positive. By contrast, less than half (48%) of Labor voters thought the Labor campaign was positive and 17% thought it was negative.

### **Gladys Berejiklian and the Liberals/Nationals are seen as most deserving of forming Government**

Four in ten (43%) NSW voters, and significantly more Coalition voters (85%) say they are most deserving.

Perceptions about Michael Daley and Labor are not as favourable – less than a quarter (22%) of NSW voters saw them as deserving of forming Government, including not even half (49%) of Labor voters.

Around half of Greens voters (52%) and supporters of other minor parties and Independents (47%) believe neither Labor nor the Liberal/Nationals deserved to govern NSW.

### **TV, major newspapers (including online content), and online news were seen as most useful in keeping NSW informed over the election campaign**

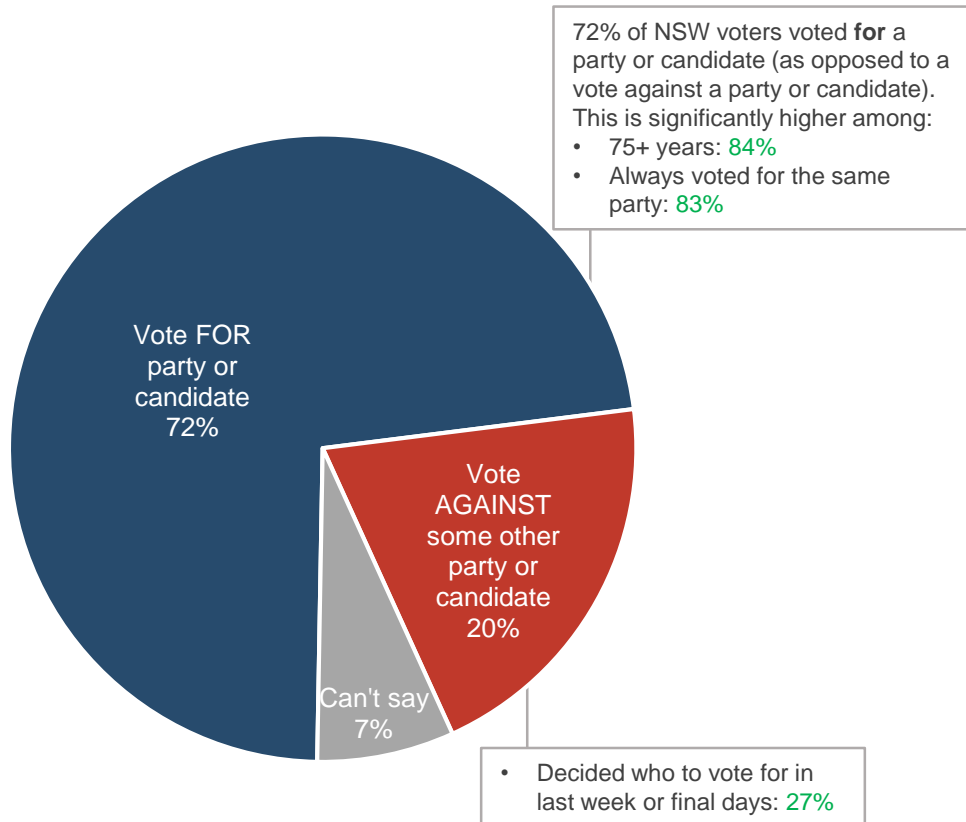
Overall, non-commercial media outlets ABC and SBS were seen as most useful (30% in total), ahead of commercial TV and radio (26%). Political parties and candidates were seen as less useful sources overall (16%).

Coalition voters were more likely to value commercial TV, pay TV and commercial radio, while Greens voters were most likely to find the ABC, SBS and online news sources most useful.

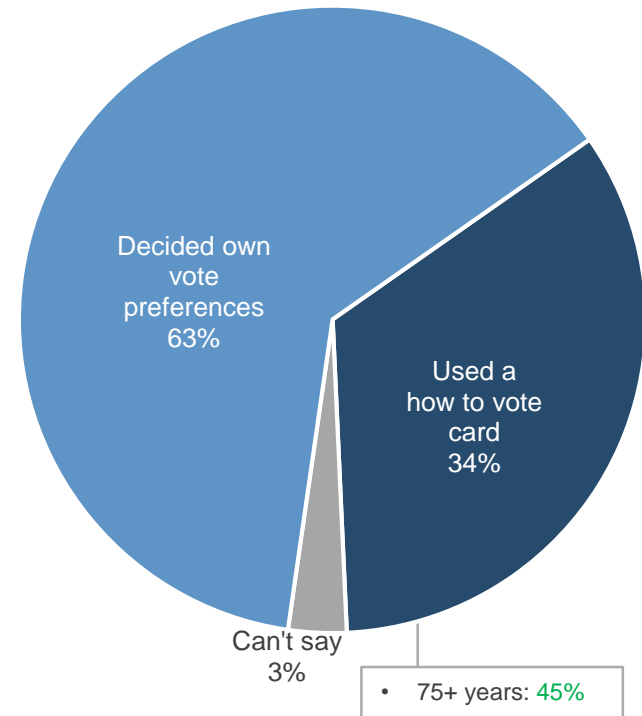


# Almost three quarters voted for, rather than against, a party and two thirds decided their own preferences

Proportion that voted for versus against a party or candidate



Preferencing – proportion that followed a how to vote card (%)



Q2. Was your Legislative Assembly (Lower House) vote more a vote FOR [INSERT PARTY VOTED FOR ON Q1] or more a vote AGAINST some other party or candidate? / Q3. When voting for the Legislative Assembly (on the smaller ballot paper), did you follow a 'How to vote' card or instructions from a party or candidate, or did you decide your own voting order (preferences)?

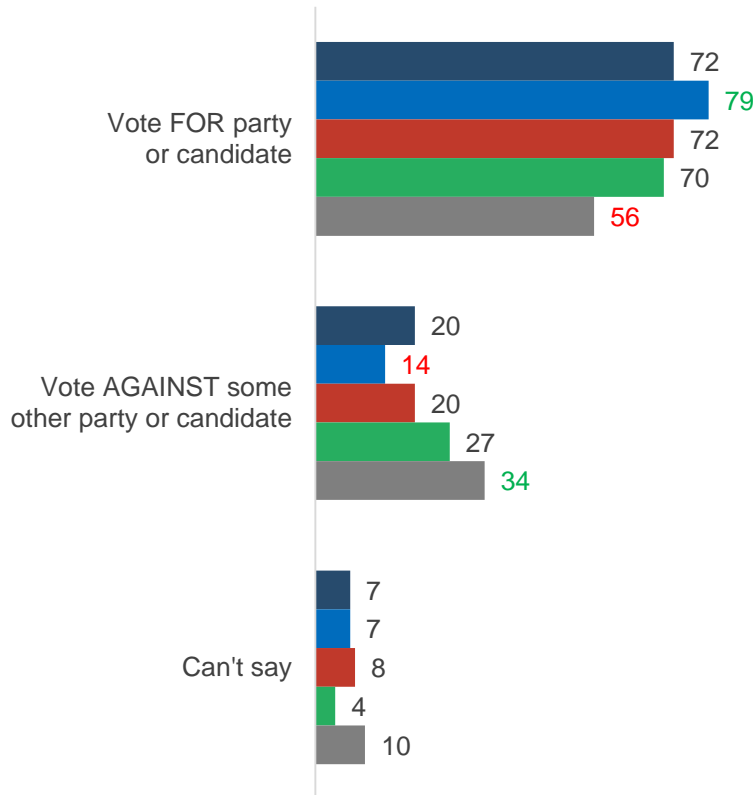
Base: NSW voters – gave vote (n=935).

Significantly **higher** / **lower** than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.

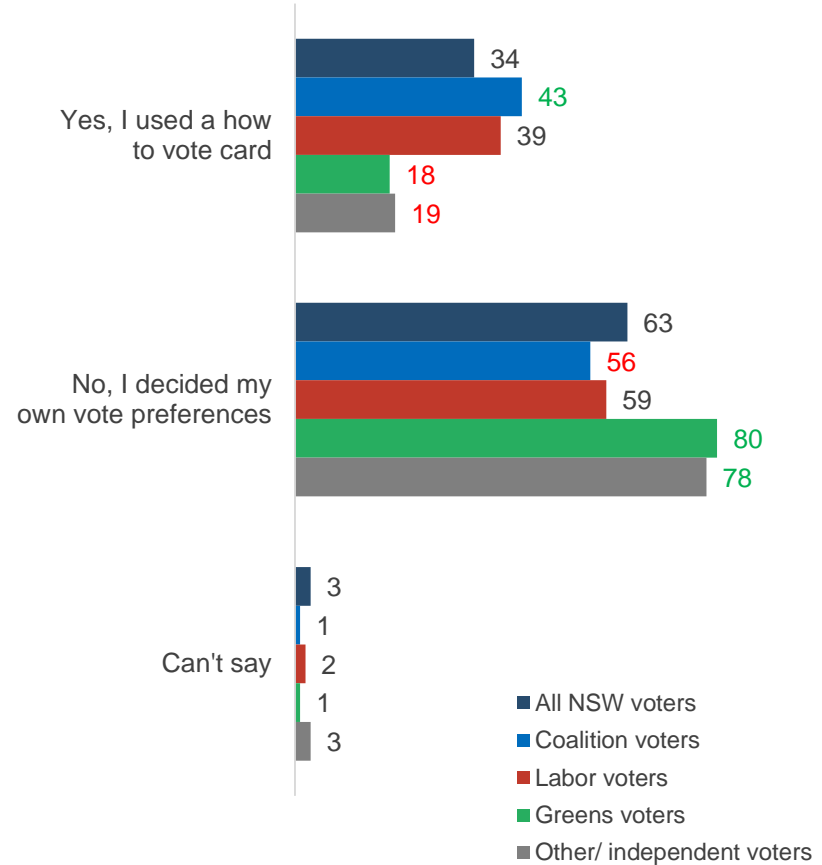
# Coalition voters most likely to vote for their party and follow HTV card, but most voters decide own preferences



Proportion that voted for versus against a party or candidate



Preferencing – proportion that followed a how to vote card (%)

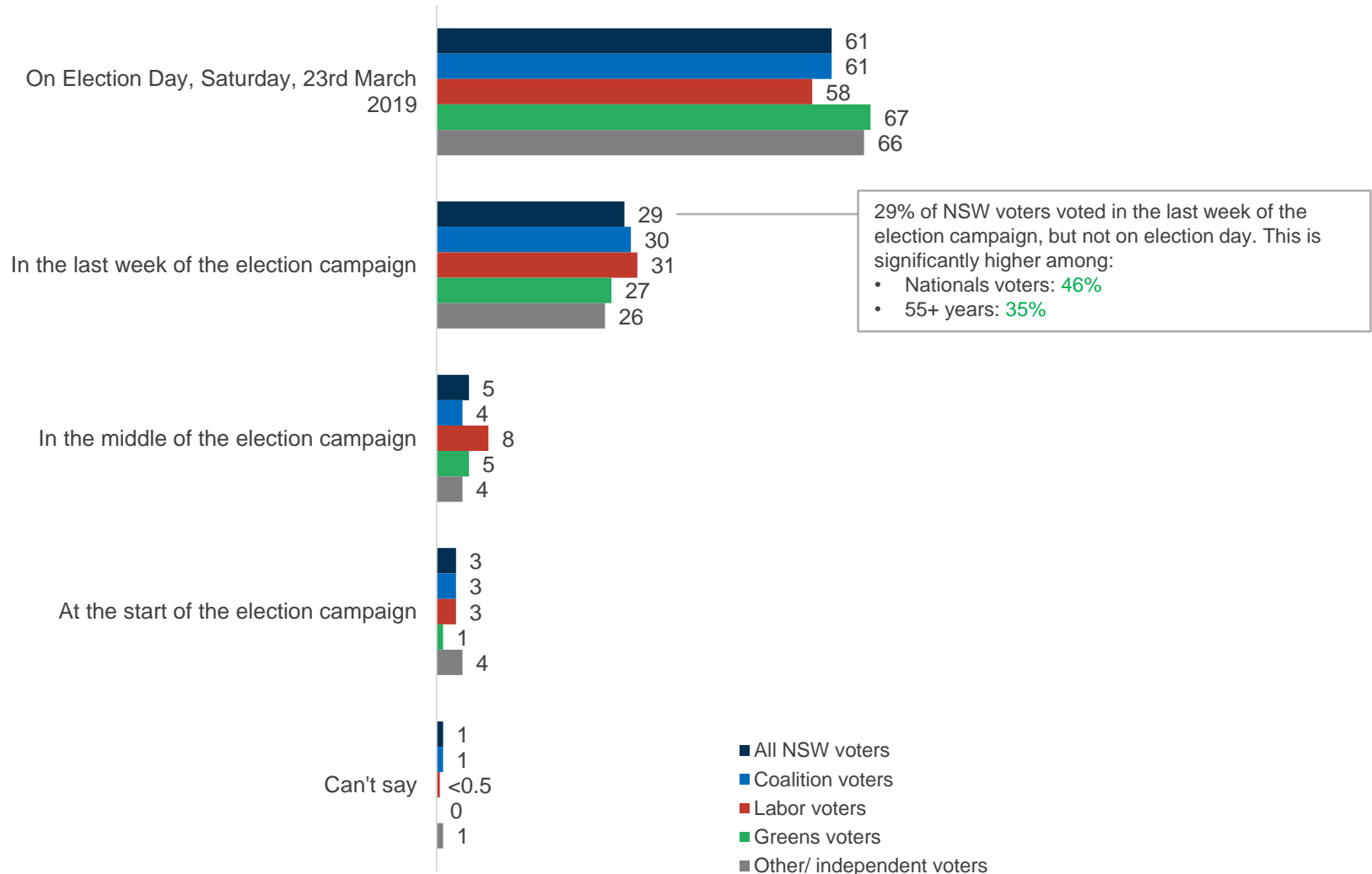


Q2. Was your Legislative Assembly (Lower House) vote more a vote FOR [INSERT PARTY VOTED FOR ON Q1] or more a vote AGAINST some other party or candidate? / Q3. When voting for the Legislative Assembly (on the smaller ballot paper), did you follow a 'How to vote' card or instructions from a party or candidate, or did you decide your own voting order (preferences)?  
 Base: NSW voters – gave vote (n=935), Coalition voters (n=370), Labor voters (n=331), Greens voters (n=87), Other/ Independent voters (n=147).  
 Significantly higher / lower than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.

# Voters overwhelmingly cast their votes in the last week of the campaign, with a majority voting on election day itself



Timing of vote cast – by voter (%)



Q7. To the best of your recollection, when did you cast your vote in this election?

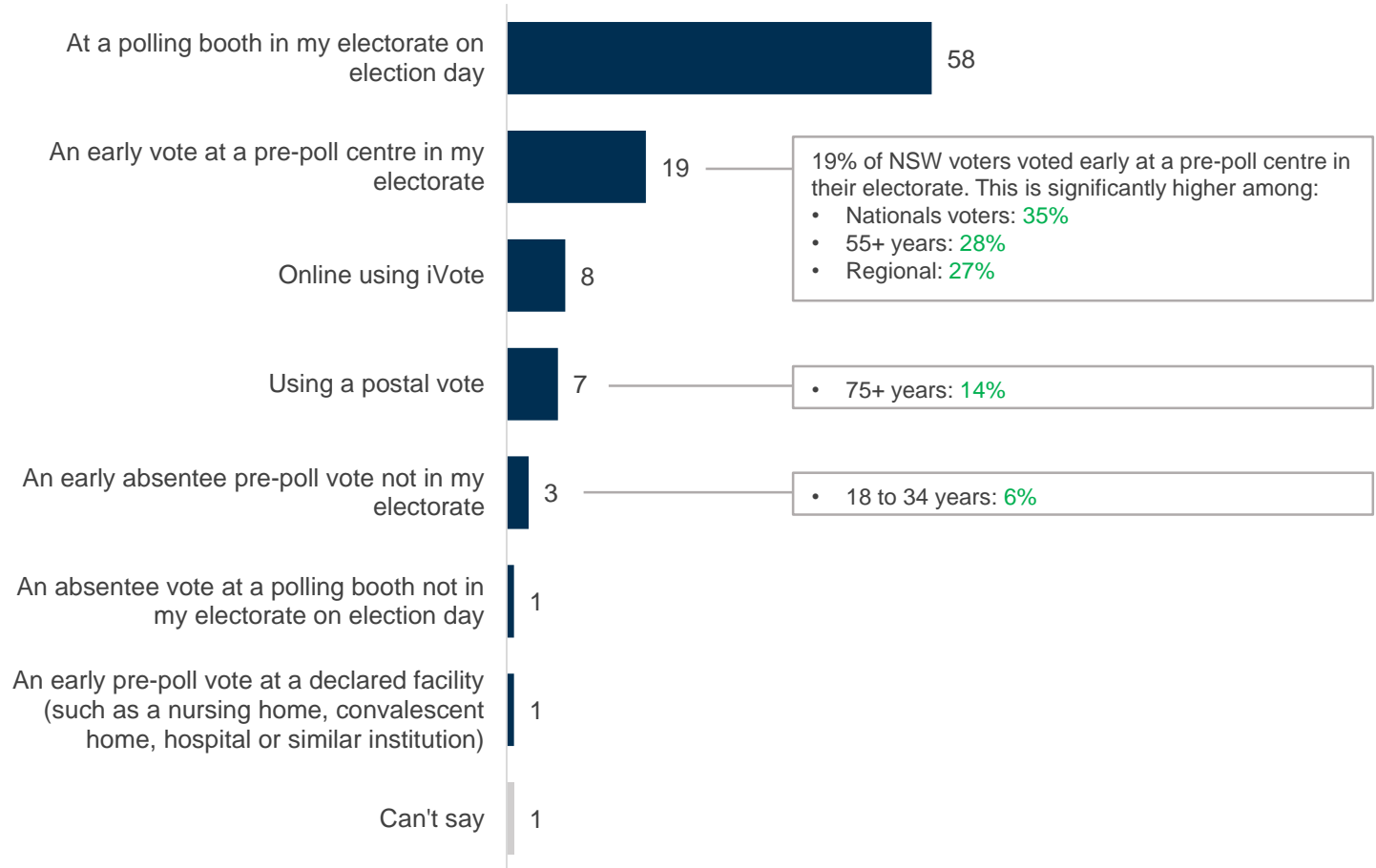
Base: NSW voters (n=1,000), Coalition voters (n=370), Labor voters (n=331), Greens voters (n=87), Other/ Independent voters (n=147).

Significantly higher / lower than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.

# Booth polling on election day or at pre-poll centres in own electorate the favoured way to cast vote



## Voting method (%)



Q7b. Which of the following best describes the way you cast your vote in the NSW State election?

Base: NSW voters (n=1,000).

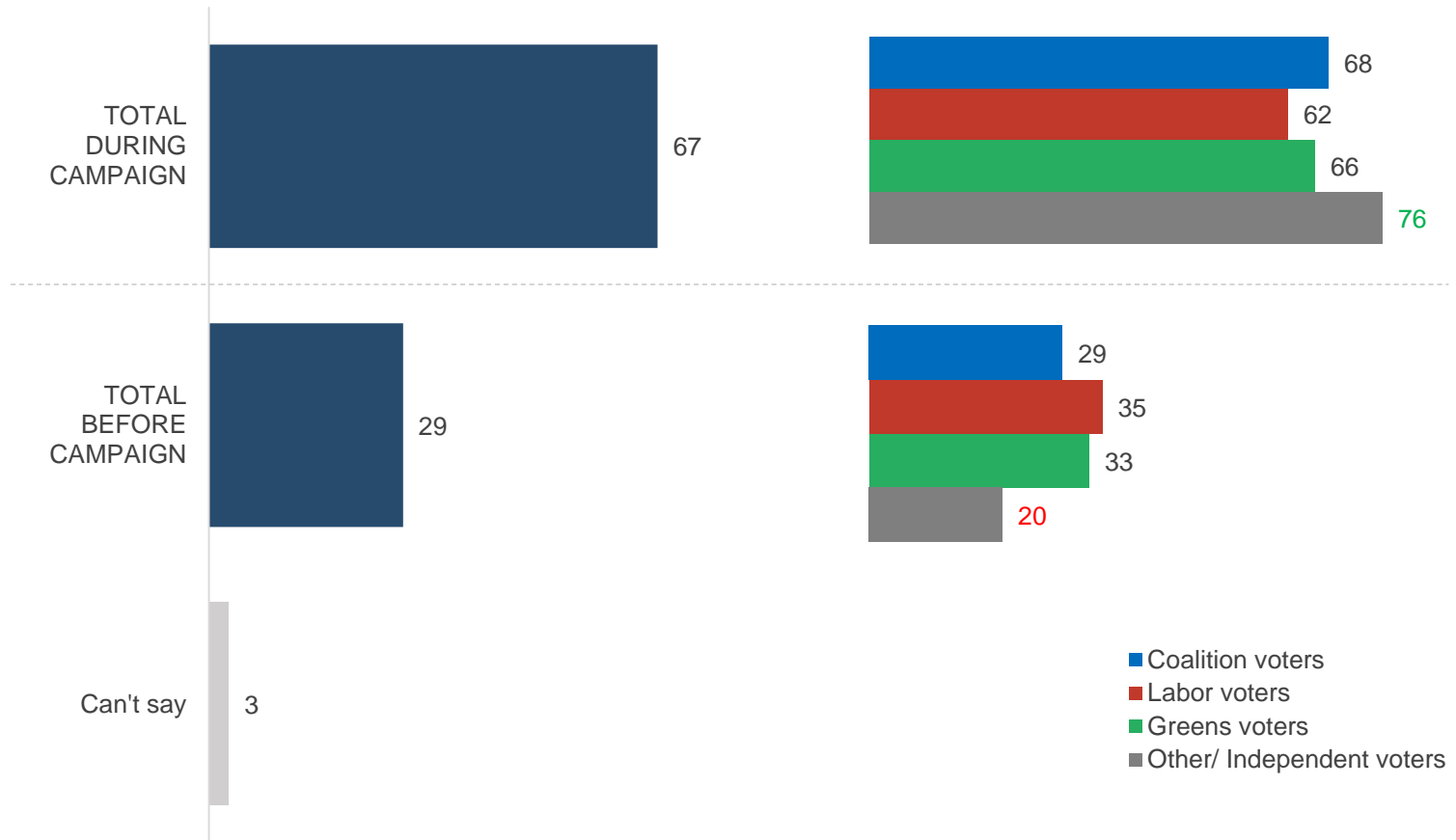
Significantly higher / lower than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.



# Two thirds decided who to vote for during the election campaign



When decision was made on who to vote for – by voter (%)



Q6. When did you decide who to vote for in the Legislative Assembly in the NSW State election?

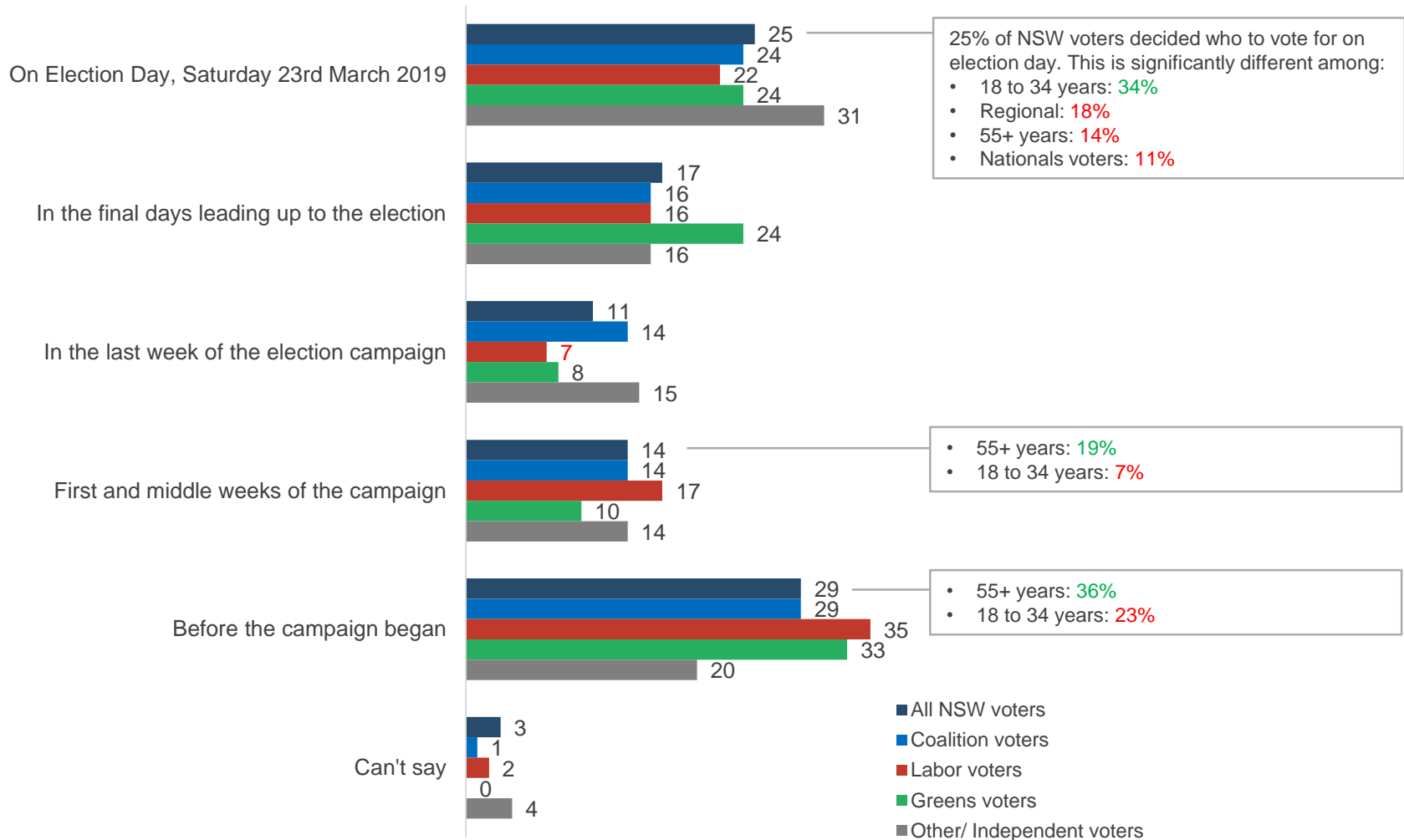
Base: NSW voters (n=1,000), Coalition voters (n=370), Labor voters (n=331), Greens voters (n=87), Other/ Independent voters (n=147).

Significantly *higher* / *lower* than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.

# One quarter of NSW voters decided who to vote for on election day



When decision was made on who to vote for (%)

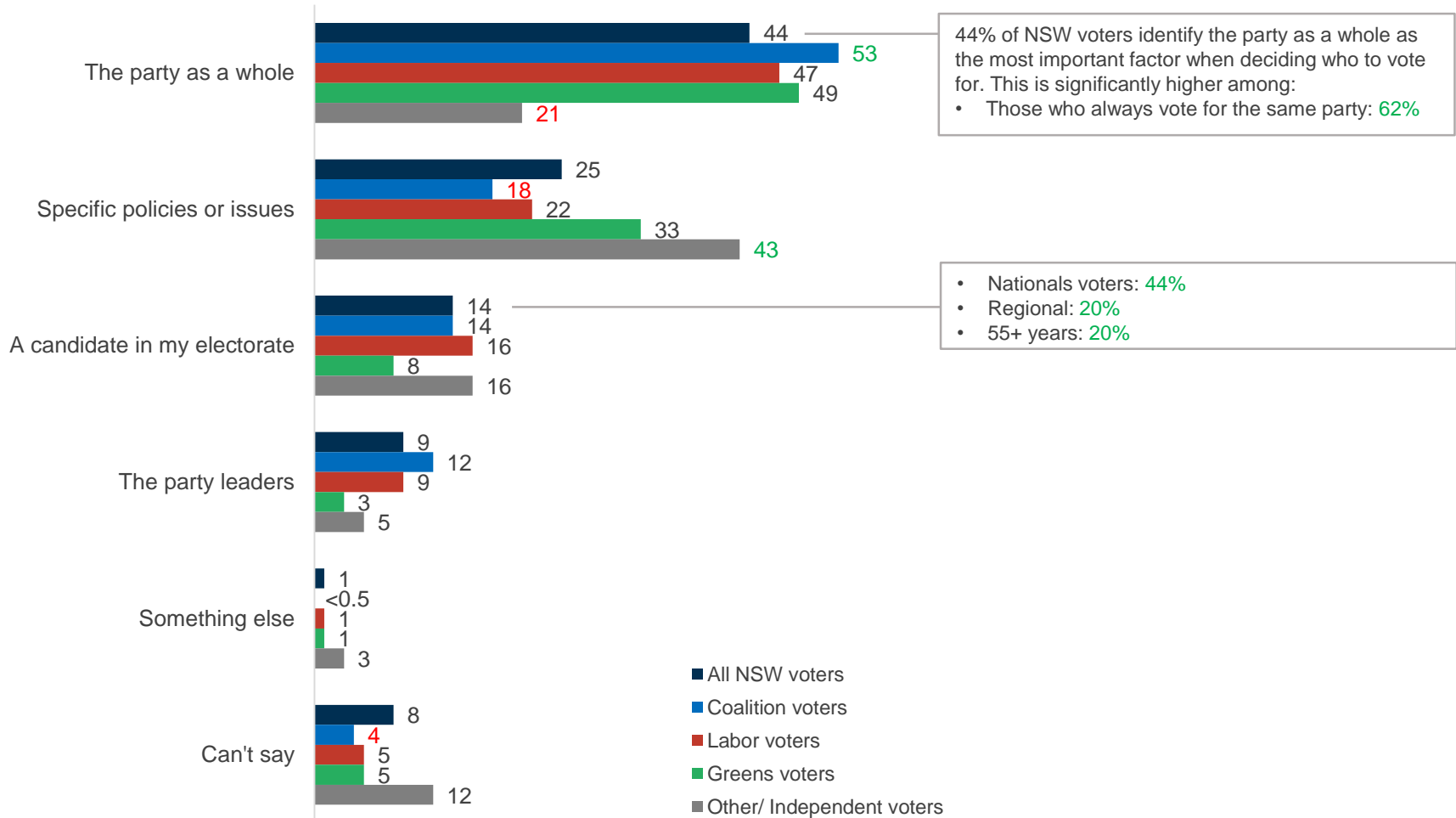


Q6. When did you decide who to vote for in the Legislative Assembly in the NSW State election?  
 Base: NSW voters (n=1,000), Coalition voters (n=370), Labor voters (n=331), Greens voters (n=87), Other/ Independent voters (n=147).  
 Significantly higher / lower than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.

# Party is key vote driver for Liberal, ALP and Greens voters, the candidate for Nationals and specific issues for others



Most important factor in deciding who to vote for – by voter (%)  
Prompted response

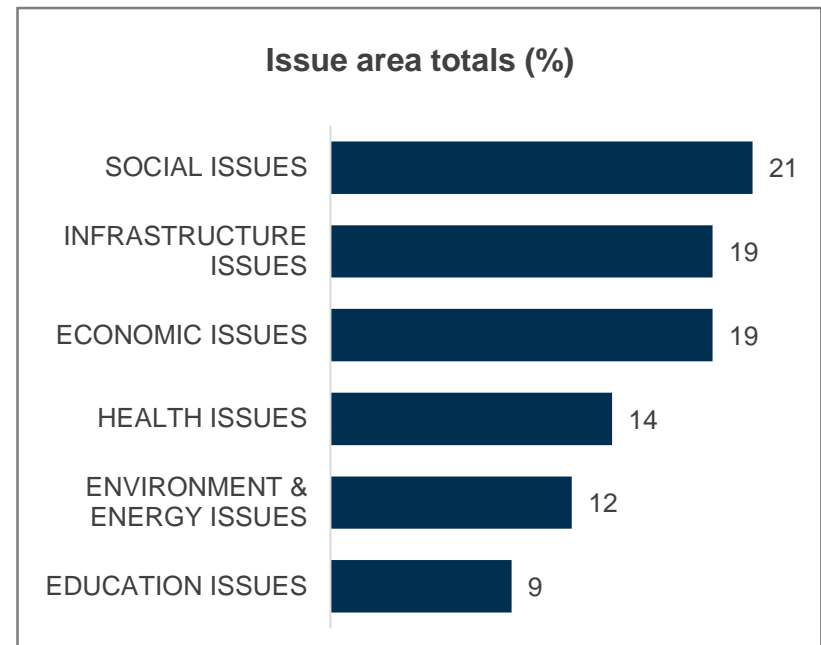
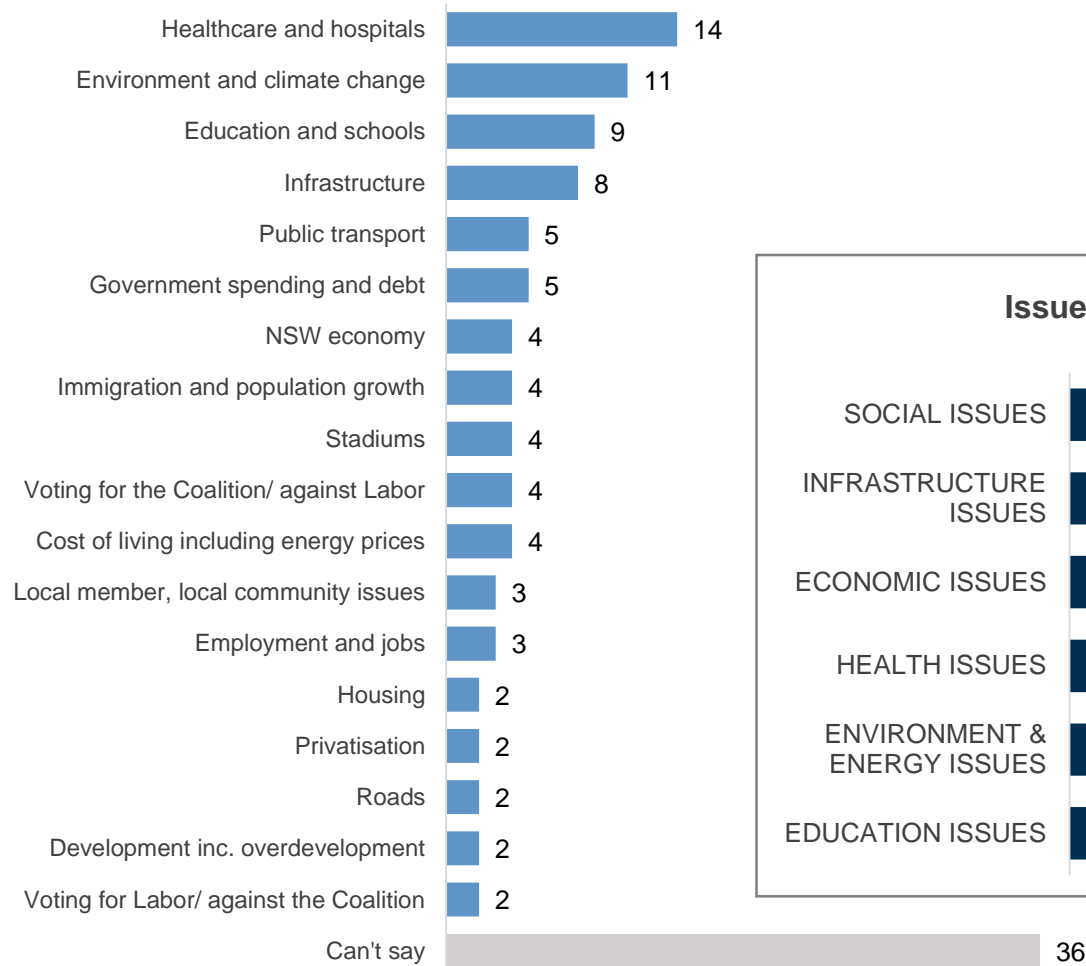


Q8. In deciding who to vote for in this election, which of the following was most important to you?  
Base: NSW voters (n=1,000).  
Significantly higher / lower than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.

# Healthcare & hospitals, the environment & climate change, are most important in deciding who to vote for



**Most important policies, issues and factors in deciding who to vote for (%)**  
 (mentions more than 1%)  
 Unprompted response

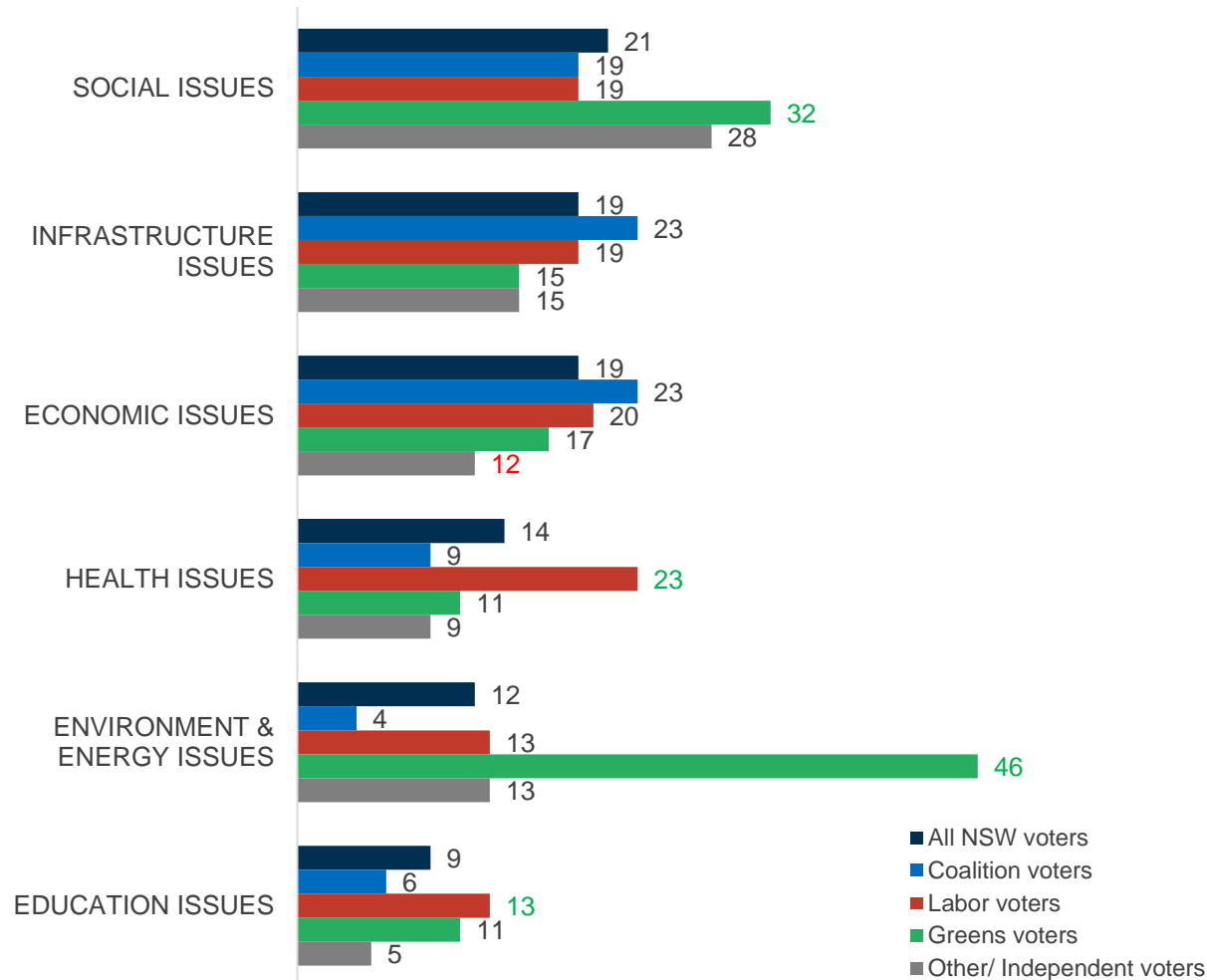


Q9. In deciding who to vote for in this election, what policies, issues or factors were most important to you? Please describe in up to 20 words.  
 Base: NSW voters (n=1,000).

# Different voter groups identify different issue areas as most important in deciding who to vote for



Most important policies, issues and factors in deciding who to vote for – by voter (%)  
Unprompted response

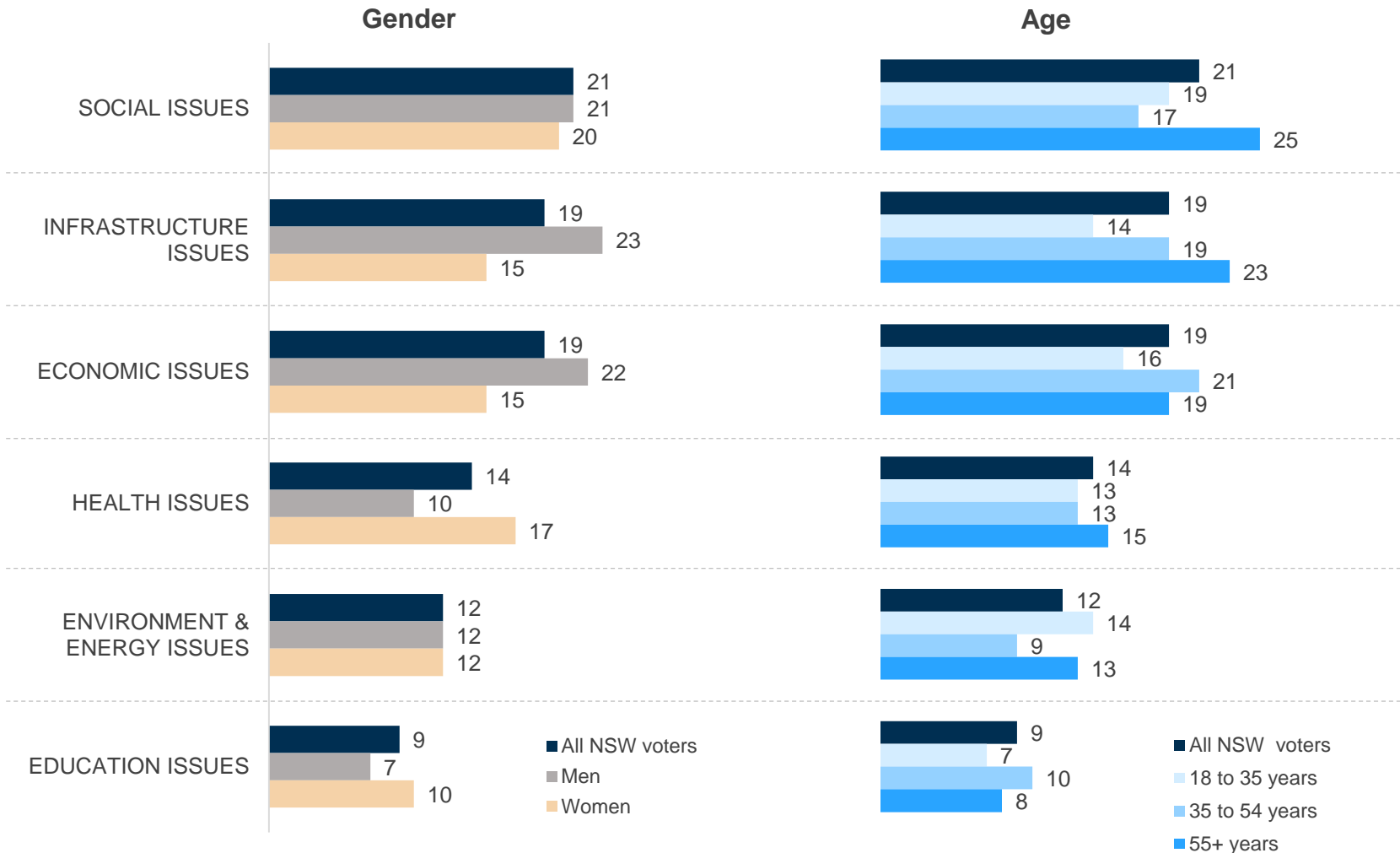


Q9. In deciding who to vote for in this election, what policies, issues or factors were most important to you? Please describe in up to 20 words.  
Base: NSW voters (n=1,000), Coalition voters (n=370), Labor voters (n=331), Greens voters (n=87), Other/ Independent voters (n=147).  
Significantly higher / lower than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.



# Social issues more important to those aged 55+ years, infrastructure issues more important to older men

Most important policies, issues and factors in deciding who to vote for – by demographic (%)  
Unprompted response

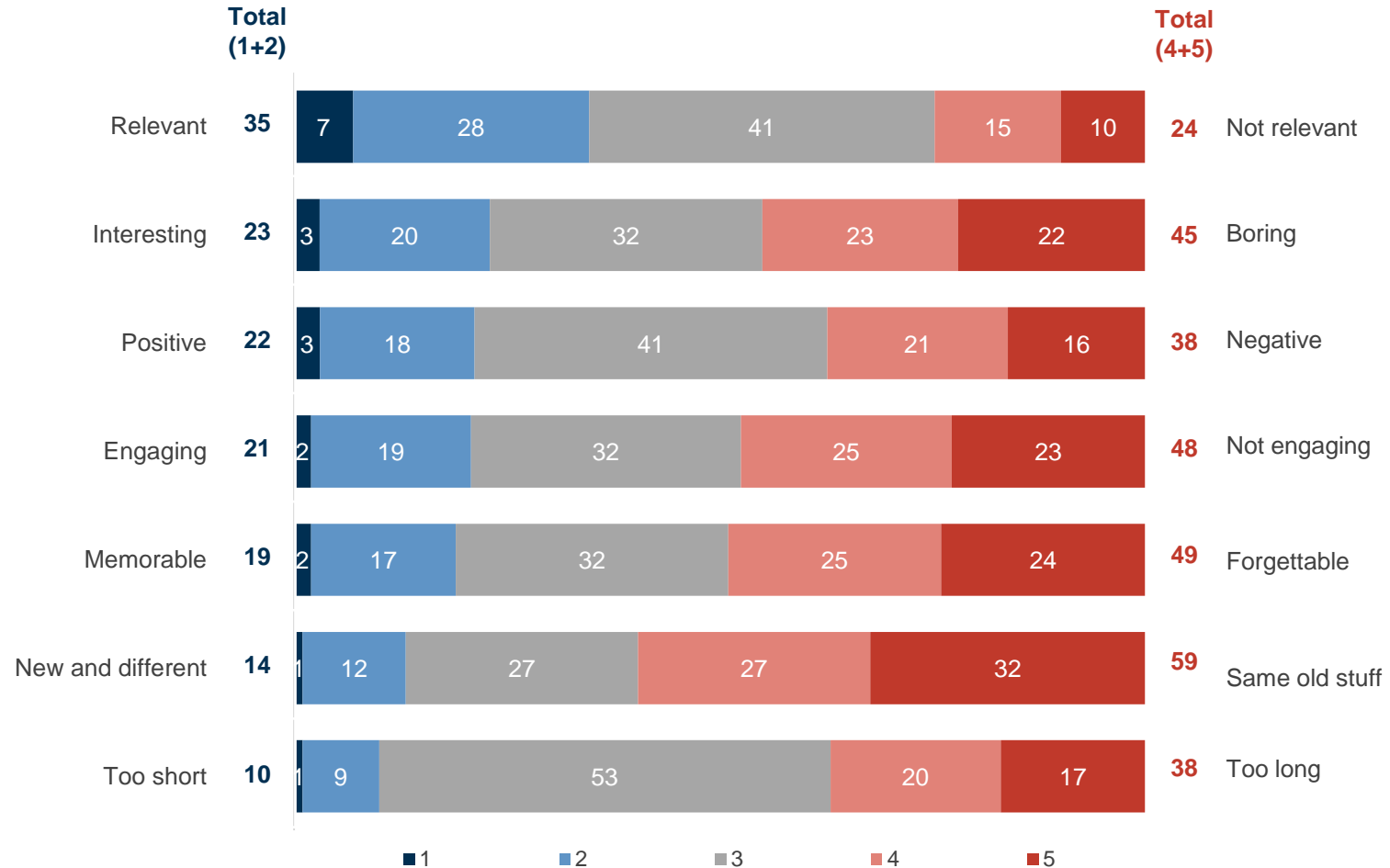


Q9. In deciding who to vote for in this election, what policies, issues or factors were most important to you? Please describe in up to 20 words.  
Base: NSW voters (n=1,000), men (n=500), women (n=500), 18 to 34 years (n=260), 35 to 54 years (n=347), 55+ years (n=393).

# The campaign is predominately seen as having been the ‘same old stuff’, ‘forgettable’, ‘not engaging’ and ‘boring’



Words or phrases describing the election campaign (%)

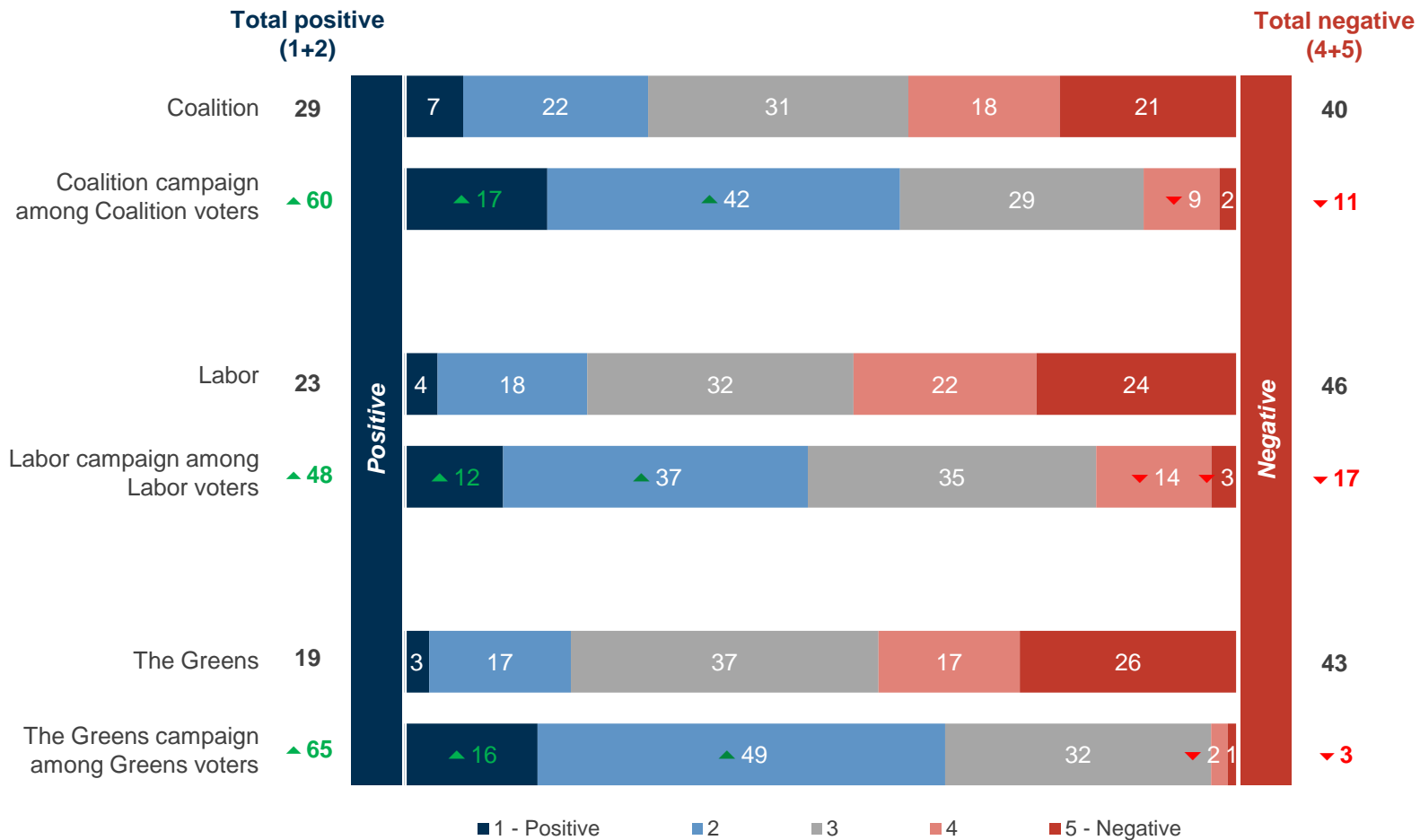


Q11a. Using the slider, please indicate which of the following words or phrases comes closer to describing this election campaign for you?  
 Base: NSW voters (n=1,000).

# The Coalition is seen to have run a more positive and a less negative campaign than ALP and the Greens



Perceptions of party campaigns (%)



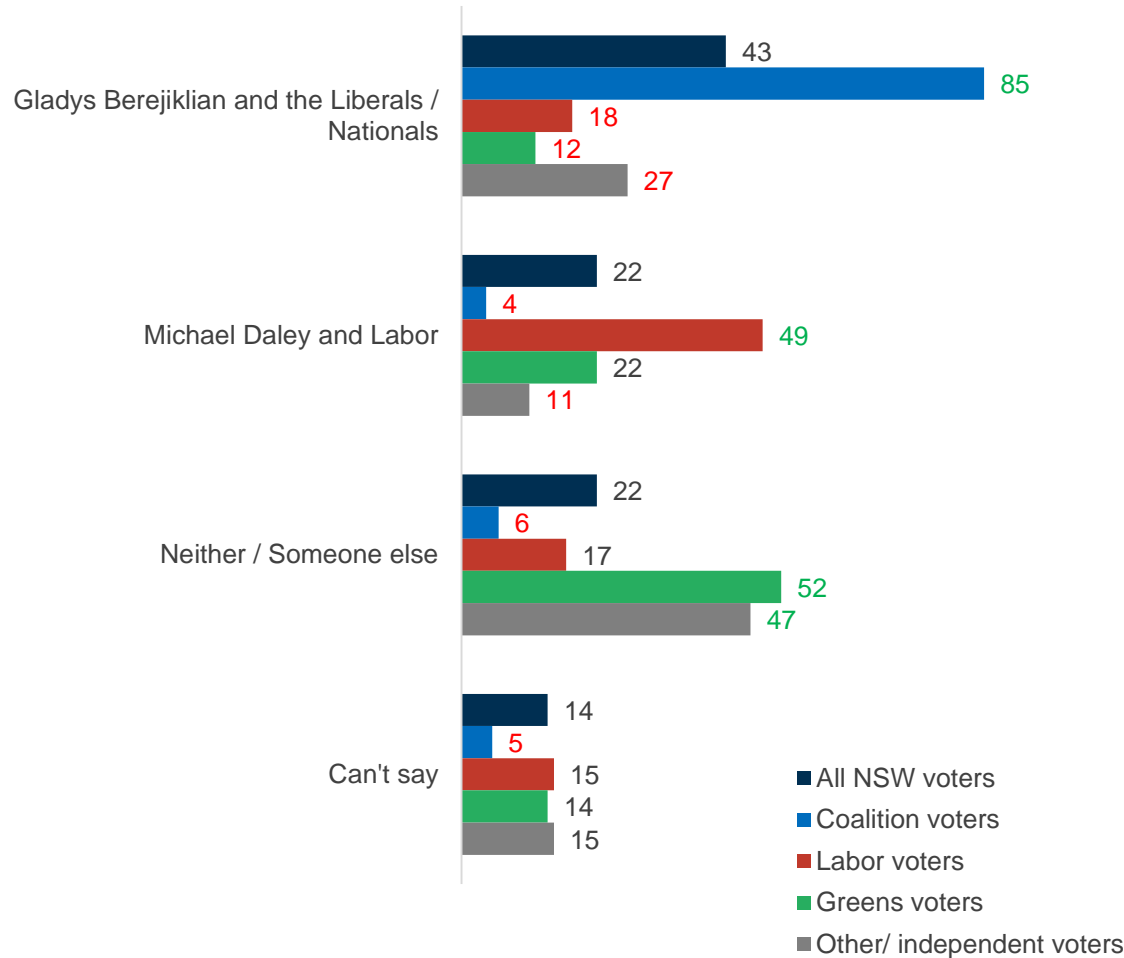
Q11b. Using the slider, please indicate how positive or negative each of the following parties' election campaigns have been?  
 Base: NSW voters (n=1,000), Coalition voters (n=370), Labor voters (n=331), Greens voters (n=87).  
 Significantly higher / lower than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.



# Gladys Berejiklian and Libs / Nats seen as more deserving of forming Government than Michael Daley and Labor



Perceptions of party most deserving of forming Government – by voter (%)

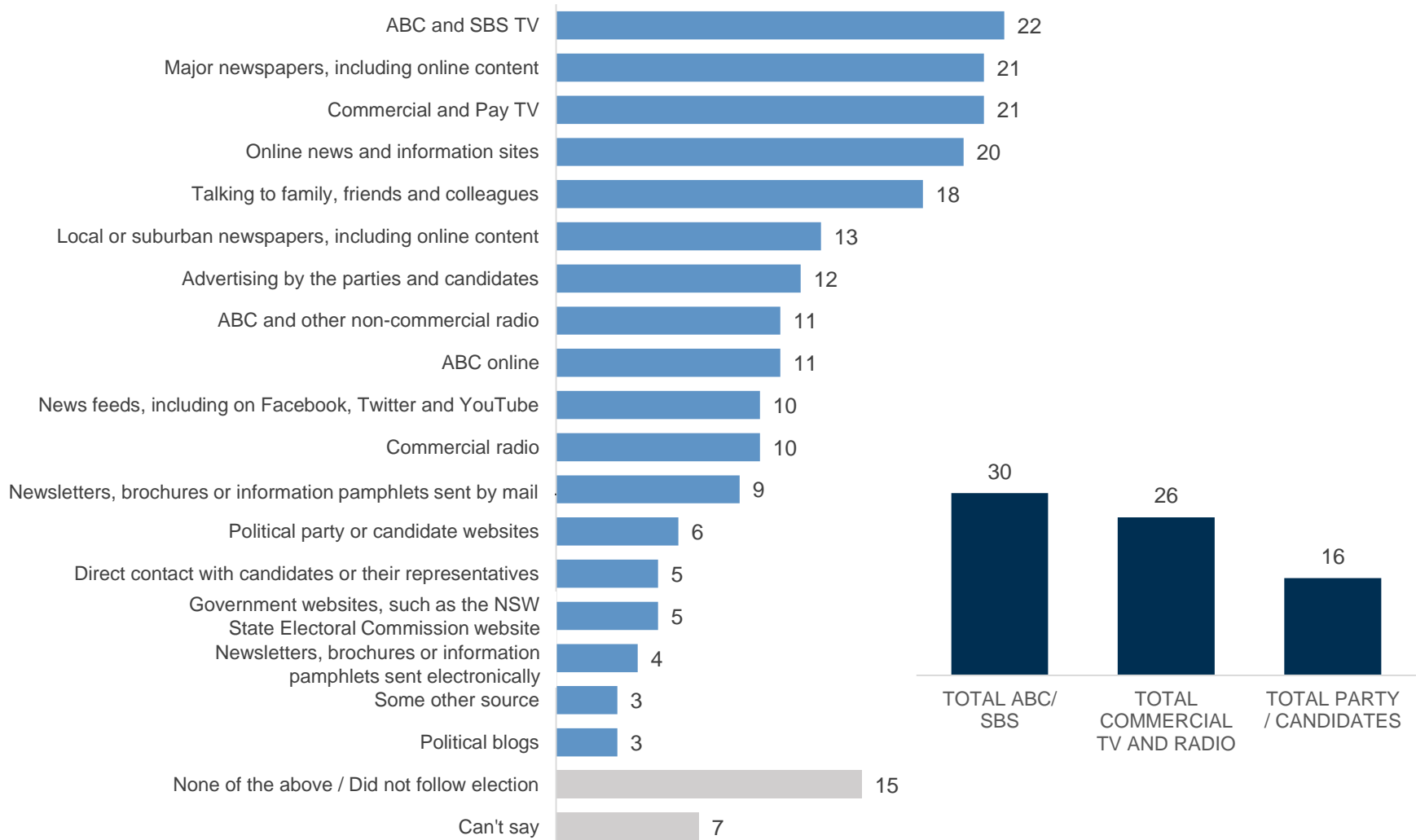


Q13. Who do you think most deserved to form Government after Saturday's State election in New South Wales?  
 Base: NSW voters (n=1,000), Coalition voters (n=370), Labor voters (n=331), Greens voters (n=87), Other/ Independent voters (n=147).  
 Significantly higher / lower than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.

# ABC and SBS TV, major newspapers, commercial and pay TV and online news seen as most useful sources



Usefulness of sources of news and information for election campaign (%)



Q10. What were the most useful sources of news and information for you in this election campaign to keep you informed and help you decide who to vote for?  
 Base: NSW voters (n=1,000).

# Usefulness of sources of news and information for election campaign – by voter



## Usefulness of sources of news and information for election campaign – by voter (%)

	All NSW voters	Coalition voters	Labor voters	Greens voters	Other/ Independent voters
ABC and SBS TV	22	19	26	33	19
Major newspapers, including online content	21	25	23	20	10
Commercial and Pay TV	21	29	21	7	13
Online news and information sites	20	21	21	34	9
Talking to family, friends and colleagues	18	19	20	16	19
Local or suburban newspapers, including online content	13	14	14	20	11
Advertising by the parties and candidates	12	15	13	8	5
ABC and other non-commercial radio	11	9	12	16	11
ABC online	11	7	13	20	9
News feeds, including on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube	10	9	13	18	4
Commercial radio	10	16	8	1	9
Newsletters, brochures or information pamphlets sent by mail	9	11	9	8	3
Political party or candidate websites	6	7	5	10	10
Direct contact with candidates or their representatives	5	7	4	4	4
Government websites, such as the NSW State Electoral Commission website	5	6	4	7	3
Newsletters, brochures or information pamphlets sent electronically	4	6	5	4	2
Some other source	3	2	3	1	5
Political blogs	3	3	3	2	1
None of the above / Did not follow election	15	9	15	10	25
Can't say	7	7	5	6	6

Q10. What were the most useful sources of news and information for you in this election campaign to keep you informed and help you decide who to vote for?

Base: NSW voters (n=1,000); Coalition (n=370); Labor (n=331); Greens/ other (n=87).

Significantly higher / lower than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.

# Usefulness of sources of news and information for election campaign – by demographic



## Usefulness of sources of news and information for election campaign – by demographic group (%)

	All NSW voters	Male	Female	18 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	55+ years
ABC and SBS TV	22	26	18	17	16	31
Major newspapers, including online content	21	25	17	19	19	24
Commercial and Pay TV	21	22	20	10	23	28
Online news and information sites	20	23	18	28	21	13
Talking to family, friends and colleagues	18	17	20	21	19	15
Local or suburban newspapers, including online content	13	12	15	8	12	19
Advertising by the parties and candidates	12	10	14	13	12	11
ABC and other non-commercial radio	11	13	8	6	10	15
ABC online	11	14	7	16	9	8
News feeds, including on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube	10	9	11	15	12	5
Commercial radio	10	11	9	8	8	13
Newsletters, brochures or information pamphlets sent by mail	9	7	10	4	8	14
Political party or candidate websites	6	7	6	9	8	3
Direct contact with candidates or their representatives	5	6	5	3	5	8
Government websites, such as the NSW State Electoral Commission website	5	6	5	7	6	2
Newsletters, brochures or information pamphlets sent electronically	4	5	4	4	5	4
Some other source	3	3	3	1	1	5
Political blogs	3	3	2	6	2	1
None of the above / Did not follow election	15	13	17	15	16	14
Can't say	7	8	6	8	9	4

Q10. What were the most useful sources of news and information for you in this election campaign to keep you informed and help you decide who to vote for?

Base: NSW voters (n=1,000); men (n=500); women (n=500); 18 to 34 years (n=260); 35 to 54 years (n=347); 55+ years (n=396).

Significantly higher / lower than all NSW voters at the 95% confidence interval.



## Research methodology: An overview

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### Quantitative Online survey

#### **n=1,000 voters who voted in the State Election on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

- Survey quotas on age, gender and location, and weighting applied at the analysis stage to actual age/gender/location proportions based on ABS census data.
- The maximum margin of error on the total sample of n=1,000 is +/- 3.1% at the 95% confidence level.
- Differences of +/-1% for net scores are due to rounding.
- 10 minutes in length.

Conducted 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**THERE ARE  
OVER  
8 MILLION  
PEOPLE IN  
NEW SOUTH  
WALES...**

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WHAT THEY'RE  
THINKING.**



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