

What Australia Wants

National summary and Australian Capital Territory results



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Methodology

What Australia Wants presents results from a Heart Foundation survey measuring community sentiment around qualities of active neighbourhoods and support for initiatives to increase infrastructure for physical activity in and around neighbourhoods.

The survey covered several themes of active living and healthy neighbourhoods, using seven key questions asking:

1. What individuals want in a neighbourhood/suburb in general (unprompted).
2. What level of importance people give to a list of neighbourhood design elements, based on the seven Healthy Active by Design features.
3. How individuals rank these design elements from most to least important in deciding where to live.
4. How individuals rate the availability of active living elements in their current neighbourhood.
5. What level of support individuals have for governments' funding for active living infrastructure.
6. What level of support individuals have for a National Physical Activity Strategy for Australia.
7. What level of knowledge individuals have about the connection between physical activity and health and wellbeing.

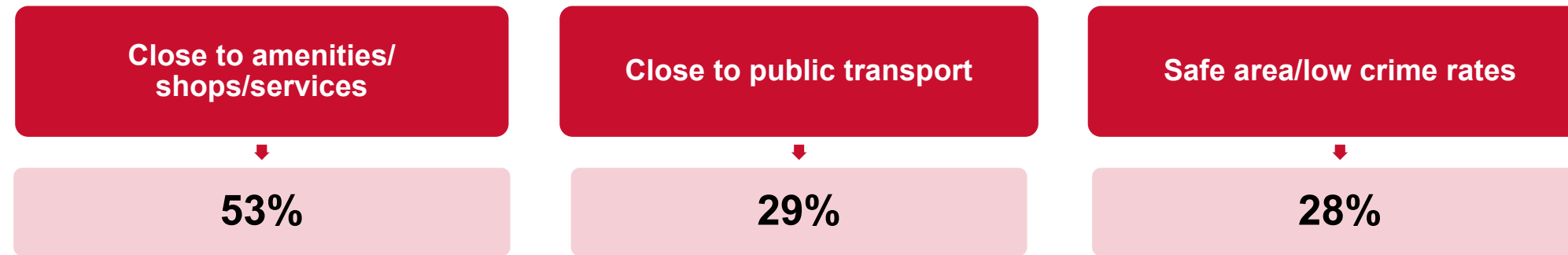
Surveys were conducted online over a three-week period. Survey results are based on a pool of 2,895 total respondents, weighted to be nationally representative of the population in terms of age, gender and location. This included 217 participants in the ACT, compared to 274 in Tasmania and 299 in South Australia.



Summary of national results

What Australians want

Most important elements when thinking about moving to a new area (unprompted)



Top three important design features when deciding where to live (prompted)



When deciding where to live, participants overwhelmingly indicated their desire for **proximity to fresh food and services, neighbourhood safety** and **access to public outdoor and open areas**.

‘Housing diversity’ was mentioned when asked to prioritise some features over others but did not feature when broken out into individual elements. This suggests that **the right type of house in the right area is more of an essential need and will be prioritised over elements such as parks and open spaces if necessary**.

Neighbourhood analysis

Quality of active elements in participants' current neighbourhoods

Best performers
(percentage who
rated
excellent/good)

Public parks, open spaces,
reserves, gardens
76%

Natural elements,
vegetation
76%

Facilities in convenient,
accessible areas
75%

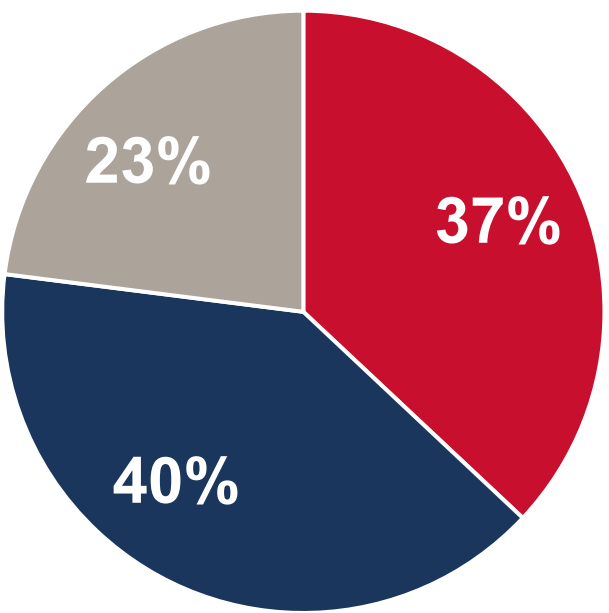
Worst performers
(percentage who
rated poor/area
does not have)

Safe cycling routes
19%

Traffic calming
measures in place
12%

Sports facilities
11%

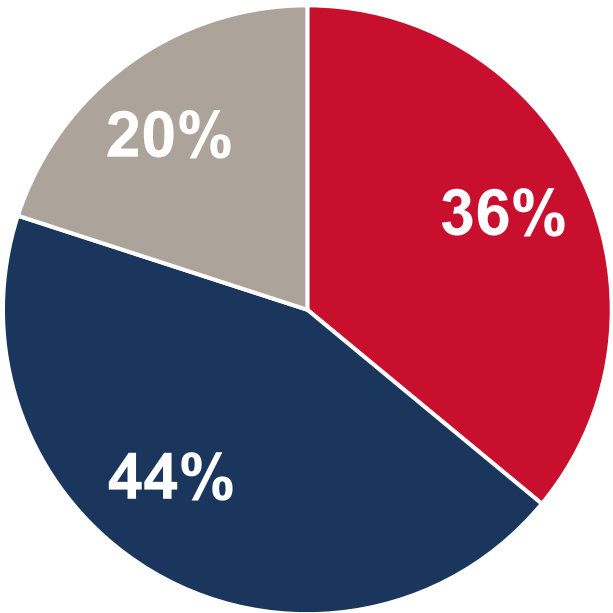
Importance of local area allowing physical activity



■ Very important
■ Somewhat important
■ Neutral/not important

77%
say it is important that
they can be active in
their local area

Whether current neighbourhood helps activity levels



■ Helps a lot
■ Helps a little
■ Doesn't help

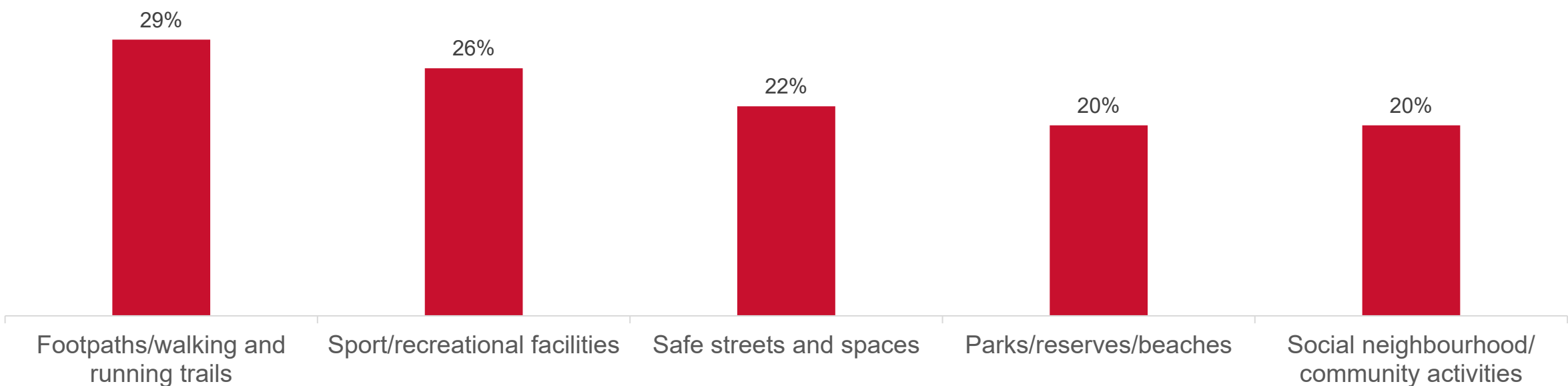
80%
say their
neighbourhood helps
them to be active

Neighbourhood analysis

Reasons active neighbourhoods are important



Elements that could increase physical activity

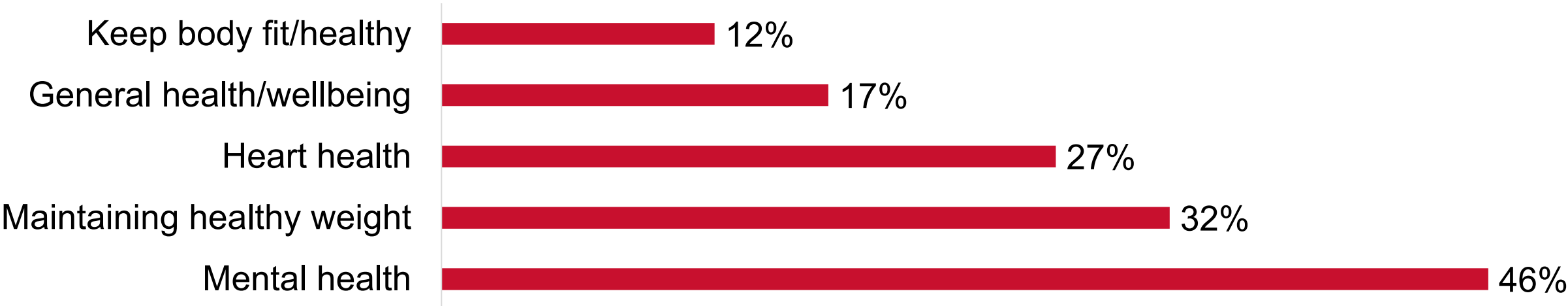


Support for infrastructure funding

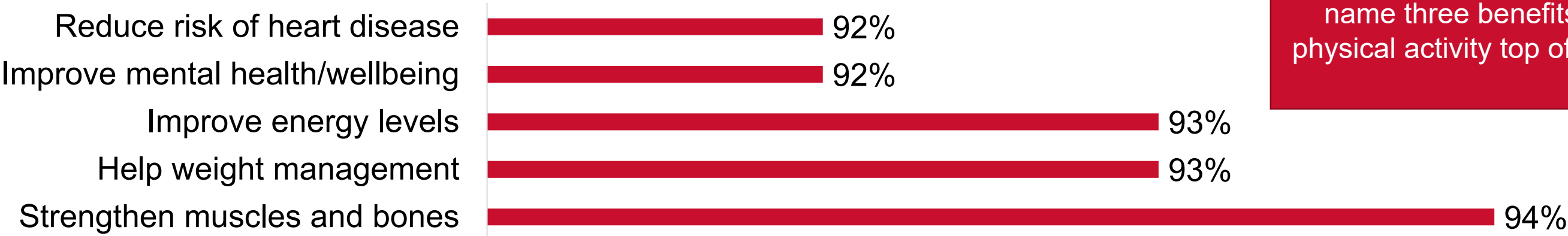
	Support for active infrastructure Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into walking and cycling infrastructure	67%
	Support for public transport funding Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into public transport	68%
	Support for speed limit reductions Very/somewhat supportive of local government reducing speed limits in neighbourhood streets	64%
	Support for a National Physical Activity Strategy Very/somewhat supportive of a national activity strategy aimed at getting people to move more and sit less	78%

Knowledge of health benefits

Benefits of physical activity (unprompted)



Benefits of physical activity (prompted)



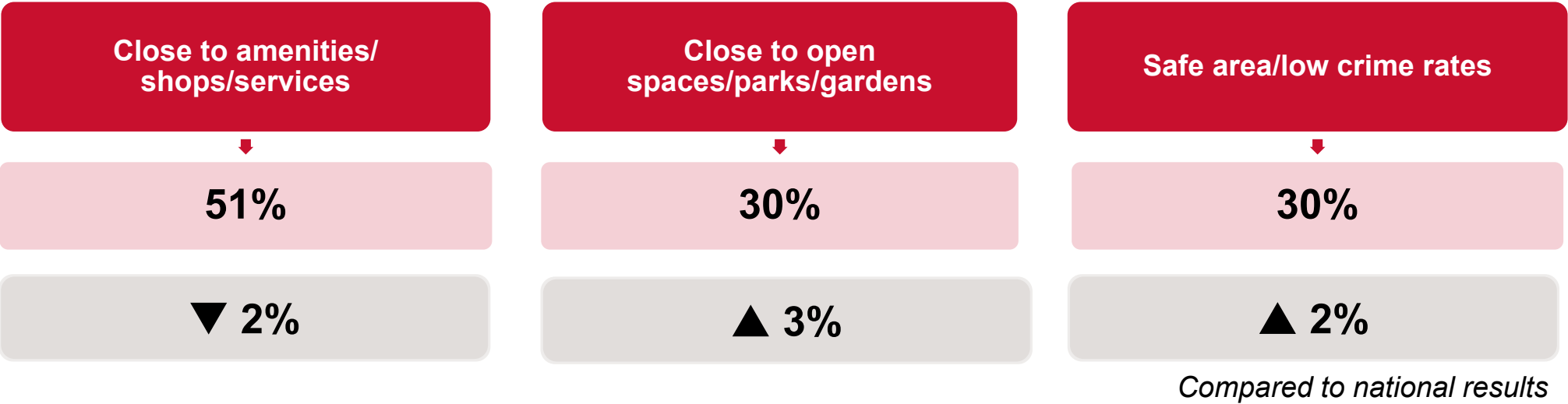
Only **24%** of people can name three benefits of physical activity top of mind

Summary of Australian Capital Territory results

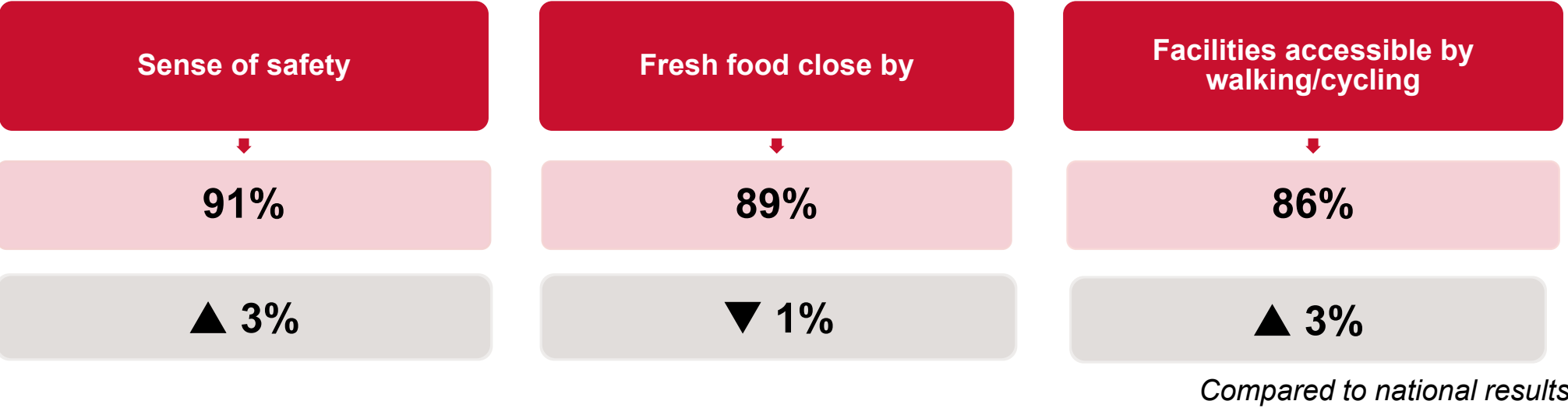


What Canberrans want

Most important elements when thinking about moving to a new area (unprompted)



Top three important design features when deciding where to live (prompted)



Top three types of features that are important in deciding where to live (prompted)

Housing Diversity



Access to Healthy Food



Destinations



Neighbourhood analysis

Quality of active elements in participants' current neighbourhoods

Best performers (percentage who rated excellent/ good)	Facilities in convenient, accessible places 74%	Public parks, open spaces, reserves 74%	Sense of safety 72%
<i>Compared to national results</i>	▼ 1%	▼ 2%	▼ 2%
Worst performers	Sense of community	Sports facilities	Traffic calming measures

Whether current neighbourhood helps activity levels



Doesn't help at all Doesn't really help Helps a little Helps a lot

83% of Canberrans believe their neighbourhood helps them to be active

Support for infrastructure funding

			Compared to national average
	Support for active infrastructure Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into walking and cycling infrastructure	70%	▲ 3%
	Support for public transport funding Strongly/somewhat in favour of government directing more of its roads funding into public transport	65%	▼ 3%
	Support for speed limit reductions Very/somewhat supportive of local government reducing speed limits in neighbourhood streets	66%	▲ 2%
	Support for a National Physical Activity Strategy Very/somewhat supportive of a national activity strategy aimed at getting people to move more and sit less	85%	▲ 7%

Knowledge of health benefits

Top three benefits of physical activity mentioned by Canberrans



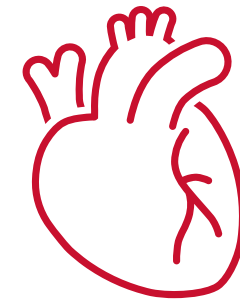
53%

Mental health



36%

Weight management



33%

Heart health

Only **29%** of Canberrans can name
three benefits of physical activity top of mind

Consistent with the national average



Key areas of comparison between National and Australian Capital Territory results

Points of difference



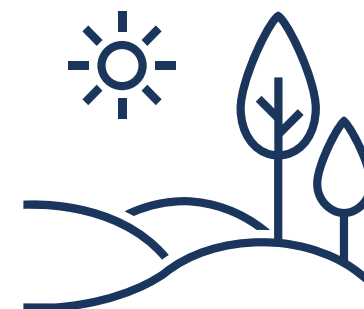
87%
Value facilities accessible
by walking/cycling

Compared to 83%
nationally



67%
Rate cycling routes as
good/excellent

Compared to 53%
nationally



71%
Rate natural elements in their
neighbourhood as good/excellent

Compared to 76%
nationally



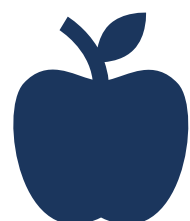
59%
Rate sense of community
as excellent/good

Compared to 65%
nationally

Canberrans have **different priorities** for neighbourhood design elements

National priorities

Access to healthy
foods



1

Sense of place



2

Housing diversity



3

ACT priorities

Housing diversity



1

Access to healthy
foods



2

Destinations



3

Comparing the findings

Commonalities

- Overall, the results for the ACT compared to the rest of Australia do not differ dramatically.
- Like those in other states, Canberran participants expressed a desire to live close to shops and amenities, close to open spaces and parks, have safe footpaths, natural elements and live in an area suitable for all ages.
- Like other Australians, Canberrans believe housing diversity is necessary, and place it above sense of place (safety, community, traffic calming measures and natural elements) when required to rank by importance.
- Canberrans believe in the importance of access to healthy food and housing diversity, however they also rank destinations (access to public transport, convenient facilities, compact neighbourhoods, living close to workplaces) as highly important.

Differences

- Canberrans are slightly more supportive of increased funding for active infrastructure, apart from public transport, which sees less support.
- More Canberrans value a sense of safety in their neighbourhoods over healthy food– with participants from all other states except NSW ranking access to healthy food as their top priority.
- Canberrans rated safe cycling routes in their neighbourhoods well above those in other states. Most states saw cycling routes ranked the worst out of all neighbourhood design elements, however two thirds of Canberrans ranked their cycle routes as good/excellent.
- The ACT sees the highest levels of support for a National Physical Activity Strategy – 7% above the national average.



Take action for healthier places

The Heart Foundation advocates for policy changes to prioritise physical activity and healthy built environments that enable healthy active lives, because we know that physical inactivity is a leading risk factor for developing heart disease.

We are working in partnership with a range of industry, government, community and academic organisations to create environments that support healthier living through better planning, built environments and transport solutions.

We are creating positive change and are directly influencing healthy active urban planning within our states and territories.

Please share, engage with us and advocate for *What Australia Wants*. Together, we can create a healthier Australia.

Share the link:

<https://healthyactivebydesign.com.au/resources/publications/what-australia-wants-report>