



19
NOVEMBER

**International
Men's Day 2019**

Rating the state of men's health in Australia



Australian Men's Health Forum International Men's Day Survey

INTRODUCTION

Australian men care about their health but they want Government to take more action to keep men healthy.

92% of men say we need to improve the way the health system works for men

90% of men say the Federal Government should do more to improve the lives and health of men and boys

85% of men say they want to see action the social issues that put men at higher risk of suicide

67% -78% say they want more action to help men drink less, eat better, manager their weight and stop smoking

Source: Online survey of 164 men

#1

Who is responsible for men's health?

“ I support any action that improves men's health but it needs to come from an educational position not a big stick position. ”

EmTasmanian man aged 45-64

References

Fair Foundations: The VicHealth framework for healthy equity (2015)

KEY MESSAGE: Men take responsibility for their health but they want Government to do more.



We asked the men in our survey whether they think health is an individual or a collective responsibility.

- **1 in 2** men agree that men's health is mostly an individual issue and that men need to take better care of their health.
- **7 in 10** say that men's health is mostly a collective issue and that “the system” needs to take better care of men's health.

WHY ASK THIS QUESTION?

Public opinion plays an important role in influencing the actions that governments take to improve our health. A key example is the value we place on health being a collective or an individual responsibility.

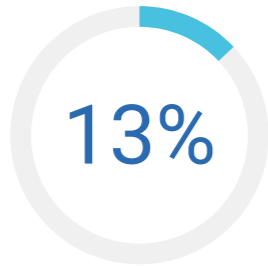
If we only focus on men's individual health behaviours, we can end up blaming them for their lifestyle choices and fail to address the underlying social factors that shape our health.

By encouraging informed public discussion about men's health, we can help strike a healthy balance between addressing individual behaviours and focusing on collective action.

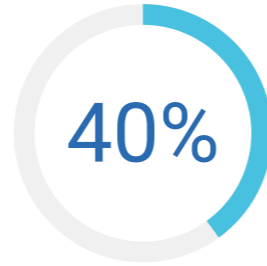
#1

RESULTS

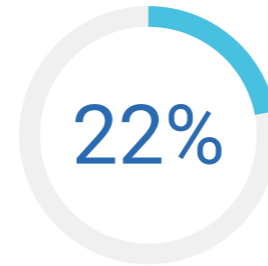
Health is mostly an individual issue, men need to take better care of their health



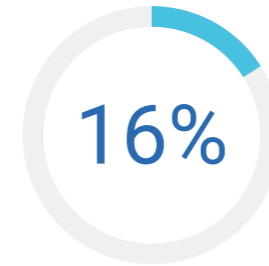
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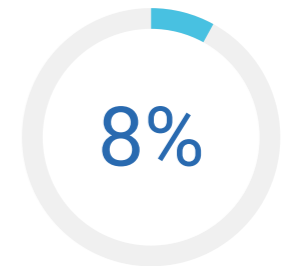
Agree



Neutral



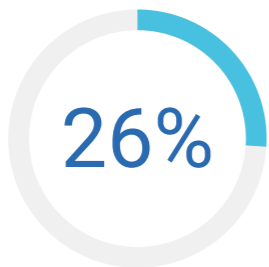
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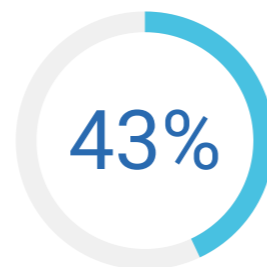
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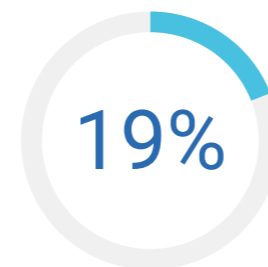
Health is mostly a collective issue, "the system" needs to take better care of men's health



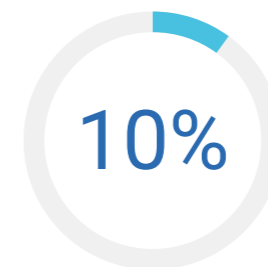
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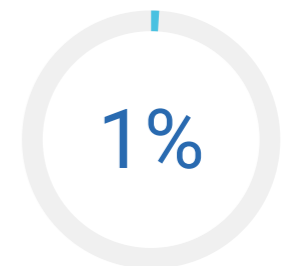
Agree



Neutral



Disagree



Strongly disagree

#2

Is being unhealthy an individual choice?

KEY MESSAGE: Men say unhealthy behaviours should not be left to 'free choice'.

We asked the men in our survey whether unhealthy behaviours should be left to “free choice”:

- **1 in 4** say if men want to smoke it's their free choice, we shouldn't try to change it
- **1 in 6** say if men want to drink too much alcohol it's their free choice, we shouldn't try to change it
- **1 in 8** say if men want to eat an unhealthy or be overweight, it's their free choice, we shouldn't try to change it



WHY ASK THIS QUESTION?

According to Government data, around 30% of poor health can be linked to individual risk factors like smoking and diet.

All of the key health risk factors including smoking, drinking, being overweight or obese, physical inactivity and unhealthy diets, are more common in men than women.

In turn, these factors increase men's risk of conditions like heart attacks, strokes, diabetes, bowel cancer, lung disease and dementia.

“ It's ultimately a man's choice but we need to get to the root causes of why they are doing it.

”

South Australian man aged 45-64

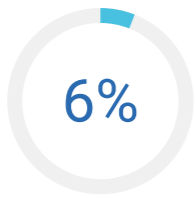
References

Australian Burden of Disease study:
Impact and causes of illness and death
in Australia 2011 (AIHW 2016)

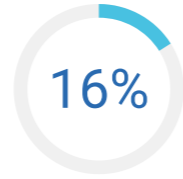
#2

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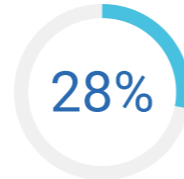
If men want to smoke it's their free choice, we shouldn't try to change that



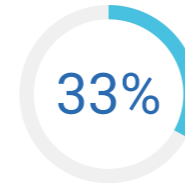
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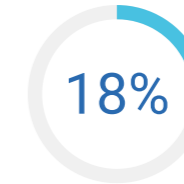
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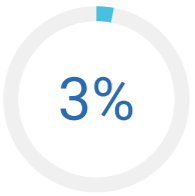
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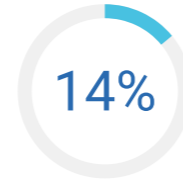
Strongly disagree



If men want to drink too much alcohol it's their free choice, we shouldn't try to change that



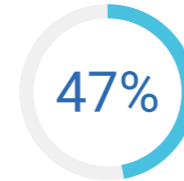
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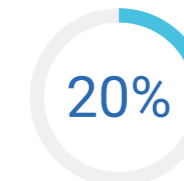
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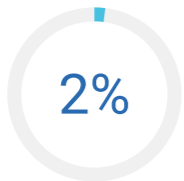
Disagree



Strongly disagree



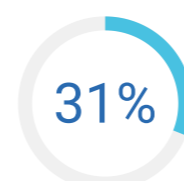
If men want to eat unhealthily it's their free choice, we shouldn't try to change that



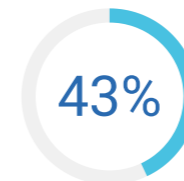
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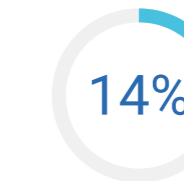
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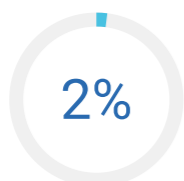
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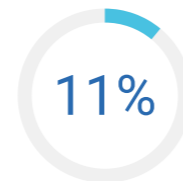
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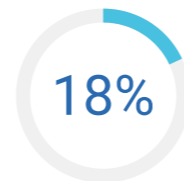
If men are overweight or obese it's their free choice, we shouldn't try to change that



Strongly Agree



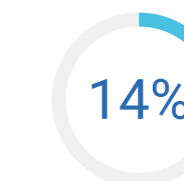
Agree



Neutral



Disagree



Strongly disagree



#3

Supporting healthy behaviour change

KEY MESSAGE: 3 in 4 men say we should take action to help men live healthier lives.



We asked the men in our survey whether they we should be doing more to help men drink less, eat better, manage their weight and stop smoking.

- 74% say we need to do more to reduce the number of men who smoke
- 67% say we need to do more to reduce men's alcohol consumption
- 78% say we need to do more to make sure that men are eating a healthier diet
- 78% say we need to do more to reduce the number men who are overweight or obese

WHY ASK THIS QUESTION?

The Government says there is a need to put more focus on reducing these health risk factors by promoting healthy lifestyle choices among men.

We know that men account for around 2 in 3 preventable deaths under the age of 75. We wanted to find out whether men supported Government action to improve men's health.

The majority of men in our survey agree that we should be doing more to help men drink less, eat better, manage their weight and stop smoking.

“ There needs to be work done on health literacy so that men from different backgrounds can get better information on health issues. ”

NSW man aged 45-64

References

Australia's health 2018 (AIHW 2018)

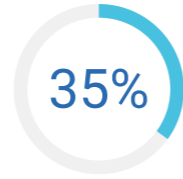
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RESULTS

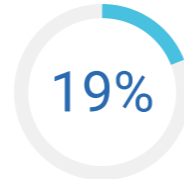
We need to do more to reduce the number of men who smoke



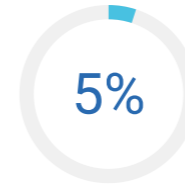
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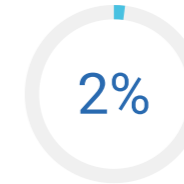
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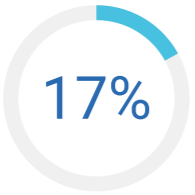
Disagree



Strongly disagree



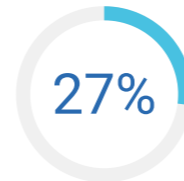
We need to do more to reduce men's alcohol consumption



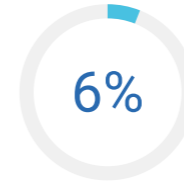
Strongly Agree



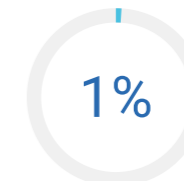
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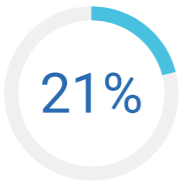
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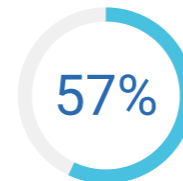
Strongly disagree



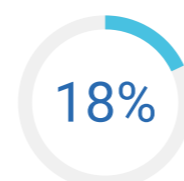
We need to do more to make sure that men are eating a healthier diet



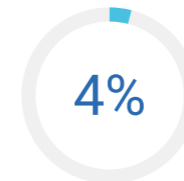
Strongly Agree



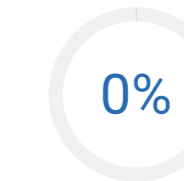
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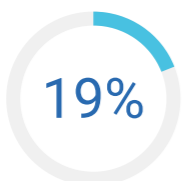
Disagree



Strongly disagree



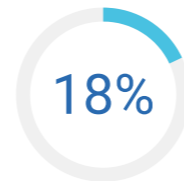
We need to do more to reduce the number of men who are overweight or obese



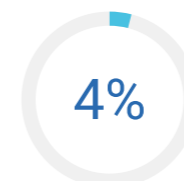
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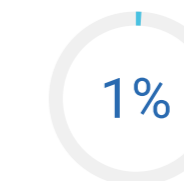
Agree



Neutral



Disagree



Strongly disagree



#4

Are health services working for men?

KEY MESSAGE: 92% of men say we need to improve the way the health system works for men.



We asked the men in our survey whether men need to get better at using health services, or whether those services need to get better at working for men.

- 92% of men say the health system needs to get better at making sure its services are working for men
- 73% agree that men need to get better at using the health services that are available to everyone

WHY ASK THIS QUESTION?

The National Men's Health Strategy calls on all levels of government to focus on the health needs of men and boys. This applies to policies, initiatives, programs and services developed at local, state, territory and national level.

The Government says the health system needs to be doing more to provide male-centred information, programs and services. The vast majority of men in our survey support the view that health services need to get better at working for men.

“ The focus on men not asking for help or using services is counter productive. Men will use services that are focused on their needs ”

Victorian man aged 45-64

References

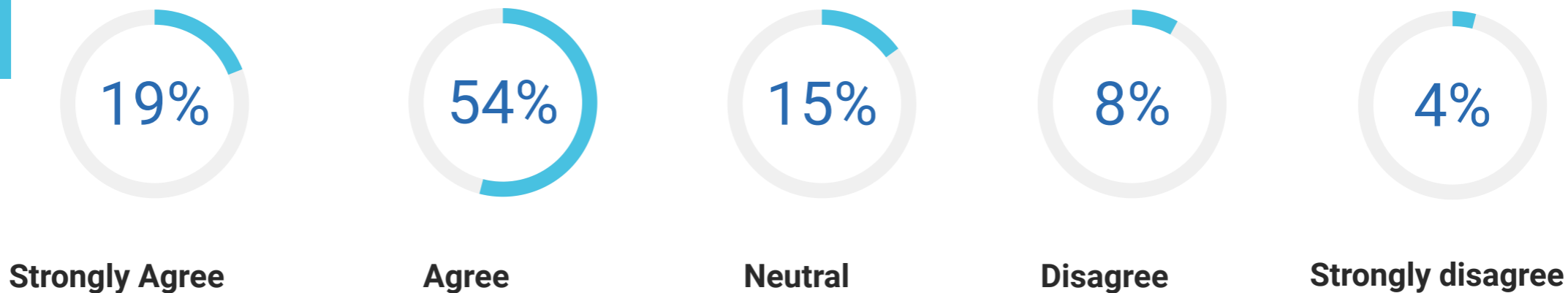
National Men's Health Strategy (2020-2030)

#4

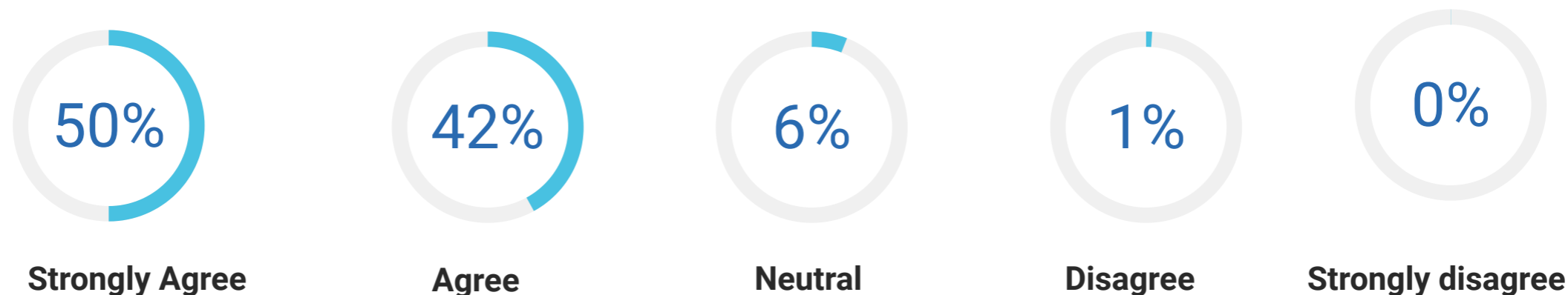
RESULTS



Men need to get better at using the health services that are available to everyone



The health system needs to get better at making sure its services are working for men



#5

Does masculinity shape men's health?

KEY MESSAGE: 7 in 10 men say masculinity can have a positive impact on men's health

We asked the men in our survey whether they think masculinity can have an impact on men's health.

- 46% said masculinity can have a negative impact on men's health
- 70% said masculinity can have a positive impact on men's health



WHY ASK THIS QUESTION?

Research into masculinity has found that some of the characteristics that men may aspire to, such as strength, sexual prowess and being risk adverse, can be linked to negative health behaviours.

At the same time, men's health researchers also point to the positive aspects of masculinity such as being a good mate, involved father, loving partner/husband and family provider.

As much of the public discussion on men focuses on the "toxic" aspects of masculinity, we wanted to find out whether men view masculinity as having a positive or negative impact on their health.

“ If you embrace your masculinity and use it positively it empowers you and those around you.”

NSW man aged 25-44

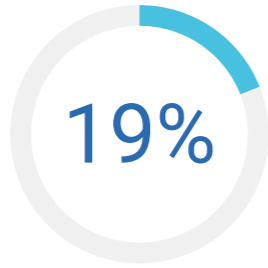
References

Masculinity in Men's Health: Barrier or Portal to Healthcare (DM Grith 2016)

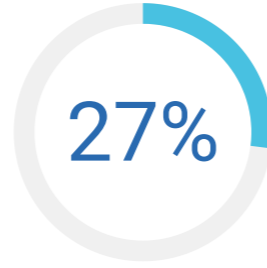
#5

RESULTS

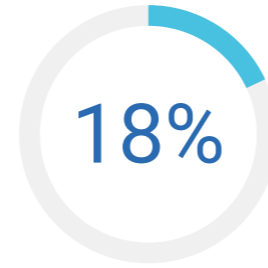
Masculinity can have a negative impact on men's health



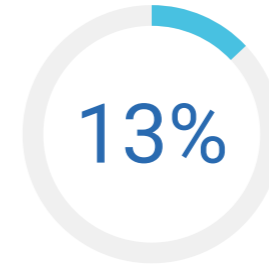
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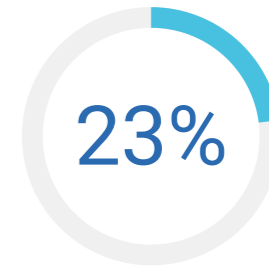
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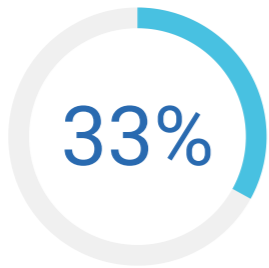
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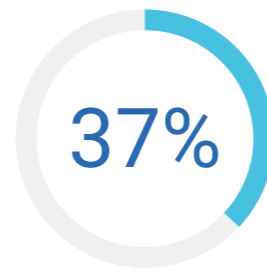
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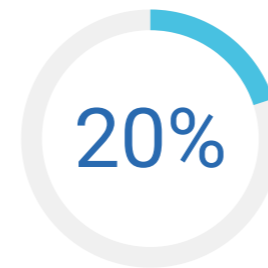
Masculinity can have a positive impact on men's health



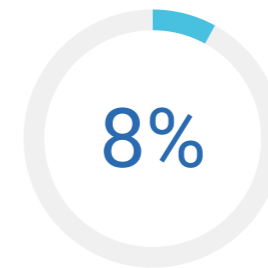
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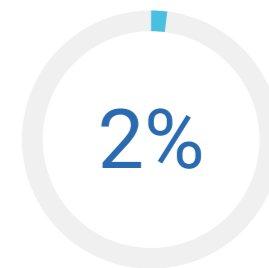
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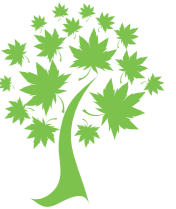
Strongly disagree

#6

Preventing male suicide

KEY MESSAGE: 85% of men say we should tackle social issues that put men at risk of suicide

- 73% say the best way to prevent male suicide is to encourage men to talk more about their mental health
- 85% say the best way to prevent male suicide is to tackle the social issues that put men at greater risk of killing themselves
- 73% say Government should make sure most of its suicide prevention funding is directed at male suicide.



WHY ASK THIS QUESTION?

Suicide kills eight Australians a day, six men and two women on average.

In the public discussion on male suicide there is a strong focus on encouraging men to talk about their mental health, while men's health advocates focus on the need to tackle the social issues that can lead to male suicide.

The vast majority of men support this focus on the social issues that can lead to male suicide. A smaller but significant majority also support the push to provide men with more opportunities to talk.

“ The pressures of being a provider, working long hours and paying excessive amounts for items like fuel and healthcare play on my mind endlessly. ”

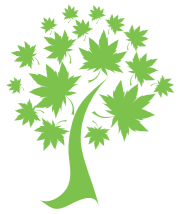
NSW man aged 25-44

References

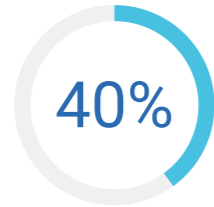
The need for male-friendly approaches to suicide prevention (AMHF 2016)

#6

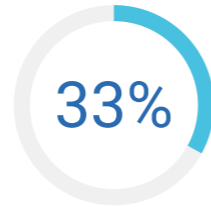
RESULTS



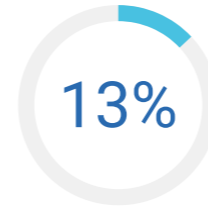
The best way to prevent male suicide is to encourage men to talk more about their mental health



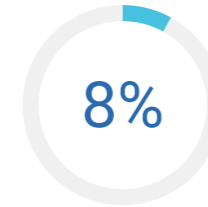
Strongly Agree



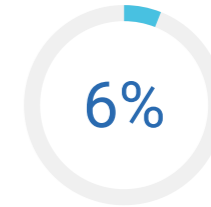
Agree



Neutral

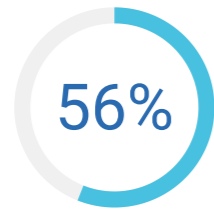


Disagree

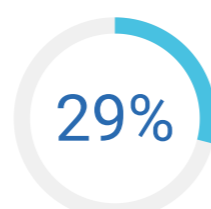


Strongly disagree

The best way to prevent male suicide is to tackle the social issues that put men at greater risk of killing themselves



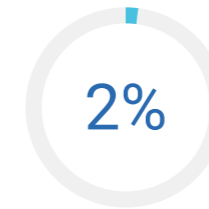
Strongly Agree



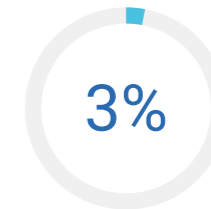
Agree



Neutral

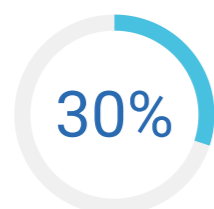


Disagree

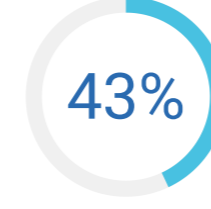


Strongly disagree

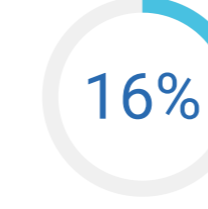
3 in 4 suicides are men, the Government should make sure most of its suicide prevention funding is directed at male suicide



Strongly Agree



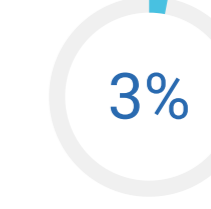
Agree



Neutral



Disagree



Strongly disagree

#7

Funding for men's health

KEY MESSAGE: 9 in 10 men say Government should do more to improve the lives and health of men and boys.



We asked the men in our survey whether they think Governments should be investing more time, money and resources into men's health.

- 90% say the Government should invest more time, money and resources trying to improve the lives and health of men and boys
- 67% think the Government invests more time, money and resources trying to improve the lives and health of women and girls, than it does on improving the lives and health of men and boys

WHY ASK THIS QUESTION?

The availability of male-friendly services is one of the key social factors that shapes men's health. This in turn is shaped by the amount of time, money and resources that Government is prepared to invest in improving the lives and health of men and boys.

We do not argue for fewer resources to be invested in women's health. However, the vast majority of men want to see the Government put more resources into men's health and a smaller, but significant, majority are concerned that the way health resources are distributed between men and women is unequal.

“ We need more male-friendly health services and equal funding in health promotion and prevention ”

Northern Territory man aged 45-64

References

Framework for a Healthier Future
(AMHF 2018)

#7

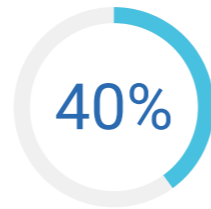
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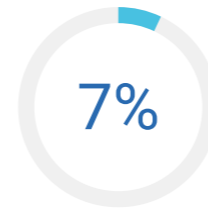
The Government should invest more time, money and resources trying to improve the lives and health of men and boys



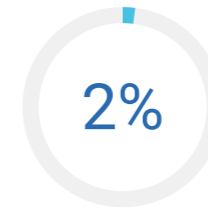
Strongly Agree



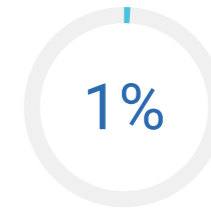
Agree



Neutral

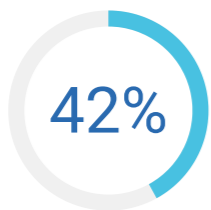


Disagree

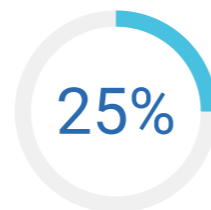


Strongly disagree

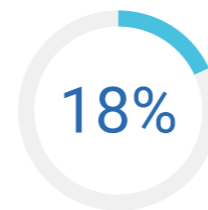
The Government seems to invest more time, money and resources trying to improve the lives and health of women and girls, than it does on improving the lives and health of men and boys



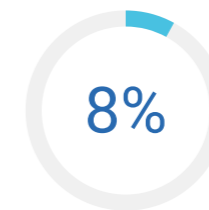
Strongly Agree



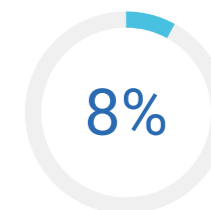
Agree



Neutral



Disagree



Strongly disagree

#8

What men say about gender issues

“ Men and grief is something I care deeply about having lost a child myself. If it's a male problem, it never seems to get the support it deserves. I feel we are now the silent majority. ”

Tasmania man aged 25-44

References

From girls to men report (50/50 by 2030 Foundation, 2018)

KEY MESSAGE: 9 in 10 men support gender equality but many say men are being left behind.



We asked the men in our survey whether they think health is an individual or a collective responsibility.

- 9 in 10 say they support men and women having equal opportunities in all areas of life
- 2 in 3 say men and boys are increasingly excluded from measures to improve gender equality
- 2 in 3 say political correctness means I cannot say openly what I think about gender equality

WHY ASK THIS QUESTION?

Recent Australian research has found that while most men support gender equality, many feel unable to discuss gender issues and are concerned that men and boys are being overlooked. While the vast majority of men in our survey also support gender equality, most agree that men and boys are excluded from work to address gender issues and feel unable to speak openly about this.

The National Men's Health Strategy states that health services should engage with men and boys, work to reduce stigma and address the gender inequality issues men and boys face. To do this effectively, we first need to acknowledge that most men feel unable to speak openly about gender issues.

#8

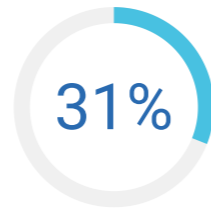
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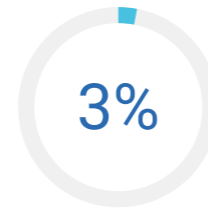
I support men and women having equal opportunities in all areas of my life



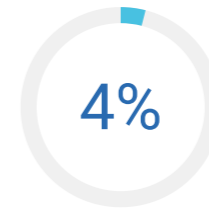
Strongly Agree



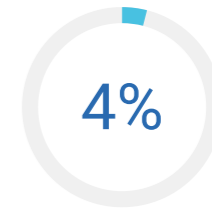
Agree



Neutral

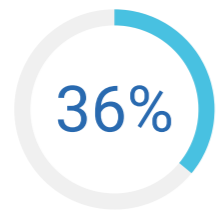


Disagree

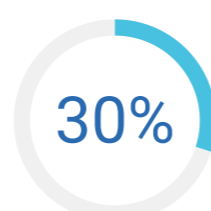


Strongly disagree

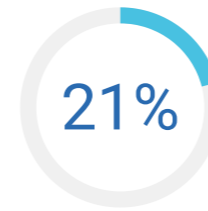
Men and boys are increasingly excluded from measures to improve gender equality



Strongly Agree



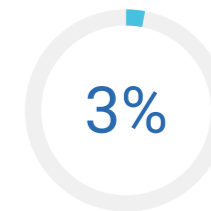
Agree



Neutral

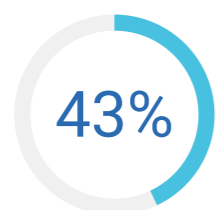


Disagree

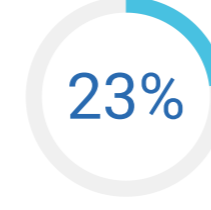


Strongly disagree

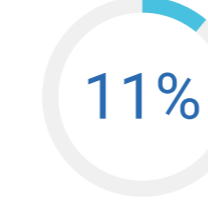
Political correctness means I cannot say opening what I think about gender equality



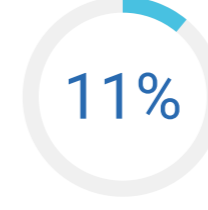
Strongly Agree



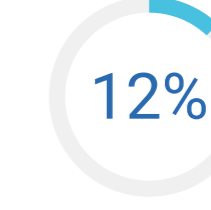
Agree



Neutral



Disagree



Strongly disagree



#9

What men say about gender issues

KEY MESSAGE: 8 in 10 men say they support International Men's Day

We asked the men in our survey whether they think it's a good idea to have international days for men and women

- 83% say it's a good idea to have an International Men's Day to focus on the issues that impact men and boys.
- 76% say it's a good idea to have an International Women's Day to focus on the issues that impact women and girls.

WHY ASK THIS QUESTION?

At the Australian Men's Health Forum, we believe International Women's Day on 8 March is a great opportunity to support the causes that support women.

At the same time, we believe International Men's Day on 19 November is a great opportunity to support the causes that support men.

According to our survey, the majority of men support this position, though men are a little more supportive of International Men's Day than they are of International Women's Day.

“ Men are willing to discuss issues given the right format, but is society ready to listen? ”

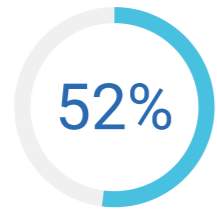
Tasmania man aged 25-44

#9

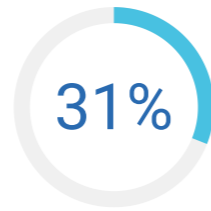
RESULTS



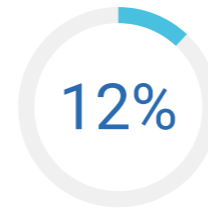
The Government should invest more time, money and resources trying to improve the lives and health of men and boys



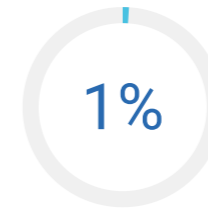
Strongly Agree



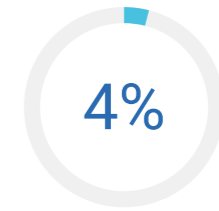
Agree



Neutral

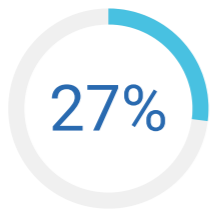


Disagree

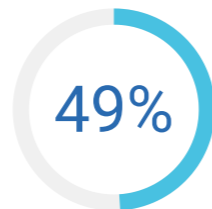


Strongly disagree

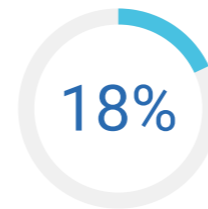
The Government seems to invest more time, money and resources trying to improve the lives and health of women and girls, than it does on improving the lives and health of men and boys



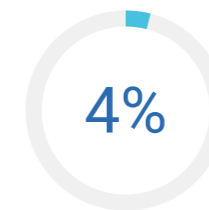
Strongly Agree



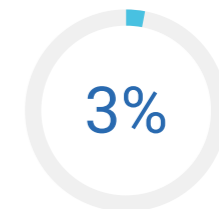
Agree



Neutral



Disagree



Strongly disagree

#10 Conclusion

Men want to work with Government to improve men's health

Australian men are interested in their health and want support from the Government to help them stay healthy.

The men in our survey view health as both an individual and a collective issue. They want to see Government investing more resources into health initiatives that target men.

Australian men want more support to help them live healthy lives and understand that complex issues like male suicide require a more targeted focus on the underlying social issues that can put men at increased risk.

Most men support the idea of giving men more opportunities to talk about the issues that matter to them. Men are also telling us that health services and society in general needs to be ready to listen when men speak up.

The Australian men we surveyed are supportive of the key principles outlined in the National Men's Health Strategy 2020-2030, but many are concerned that the Government is not putting enough funding into improving the lives and health of men and boys.

Our survey suggests that if Government puts more investment into men's health by making services and programs more male friendly, then most men are ready to take action to improve their health.

About this survey



The Australian Men's Health Forum surveyed 164 Australian men between the 5-17 November 2019.

Under 25	25-44	45-64	65+
5%	37%	46%	12%

NSW	VIC	Qld	SA
18%	21%	24%	11%
WA	TAS	ACT	NT
10%	11%	7%	2%

**THANK
YOU**

For more information contact:
development@amhf.org.au

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Commonwealth Department of Health.