



# Tracking Canadians' Attitudes on Indigenous Issues

 **INNOVATIVE**  
RESEARCH GROUP

Release Date: June 22, 2023  
Field Dates: May 11 to May 29, 2023

# Key Findings

## 1

### **Indigenous peoples' general standing in Canada remains positive, steady after a decade of improvement**

Nearly half holds a positive impression of Indigenous groups and organizations, steady since last year. This figure has almost doubled since 2014. Less than 1-in-4 (22%) approve of the federal government's performance on managing Indigenous affairs.

---

## 2

### **Canadians' sense of moral obligation towards Indigenous peoples remains high, but has slipped since 2021**

3-in-5 (62%) believe Canada has a duty to resolve the massive inequalities faced by Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, a majority now agrees that governments have failed to such an extent that Indigenous peoples should take control of their own affairs, and that Indigenous people deserve compensation for the injustices they have suffered. While Canadians' sense of moral obligation towards Indigenous people reached its peak following the Kamloops discovery in 2021, there has been a subsequent decline.

---

## 3

### **Canadians conflicted between providing equal treatment and allowing special rights to Indigenous people**

While Canadians remain conflicted between advocating for equal rights for all and recognizing special Indigenous rights, there has been a significant shift in public opinion. Net support for special rights for Indigenous peoples currently stands at +23%, compared to 2008, when Canadians were more likely to express disapproval. Special rights supporters are far more likely than equal treatment supporters to feel a strong sense of moral obligation towards Indigenous peoples.

# **Indigenous Ancestry and Personal Connection**

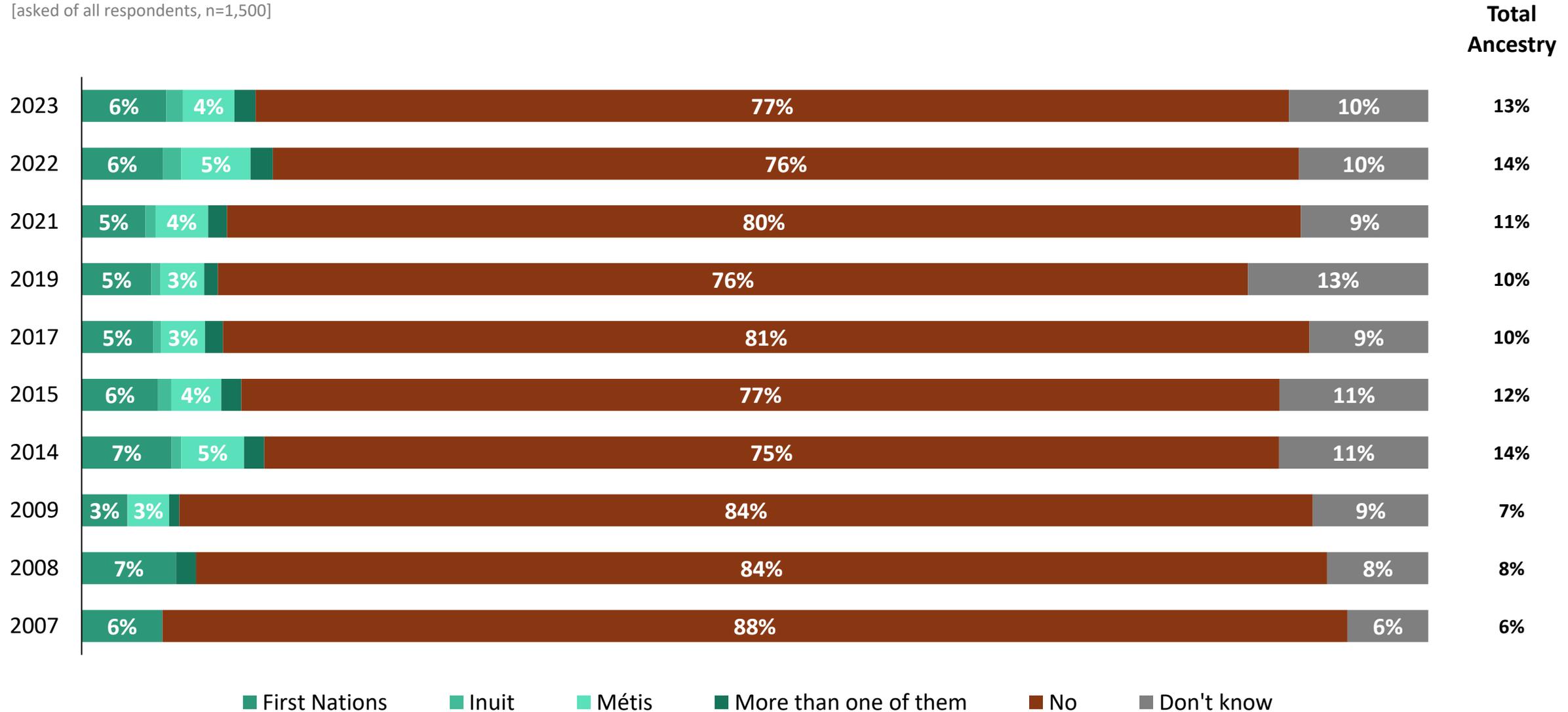
# Ancestry:

13% of survey respondents report Indigenous ancestry, steady since last year



Do you have any First Nations, Inuit or Métis ancestry?

[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]

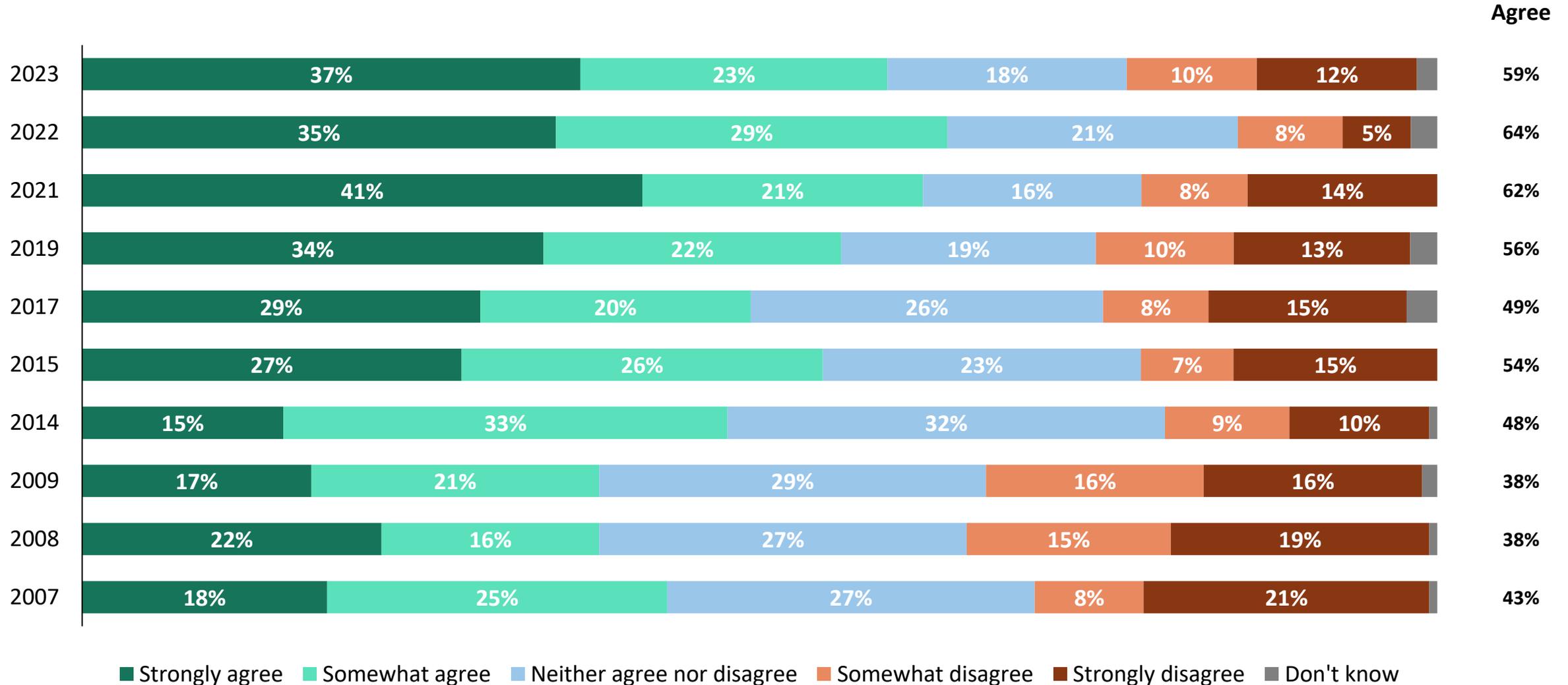


# Importance of Ancestry:

The share of those who express the importance of their Indigenous heritage steady over the past four years



Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement: **“My First Nations/Inuit/Métis heritage is an important part of who I am as a person.”**  
[asked of those who have Indigenous ancestry, n=194]



# Personal Connection:

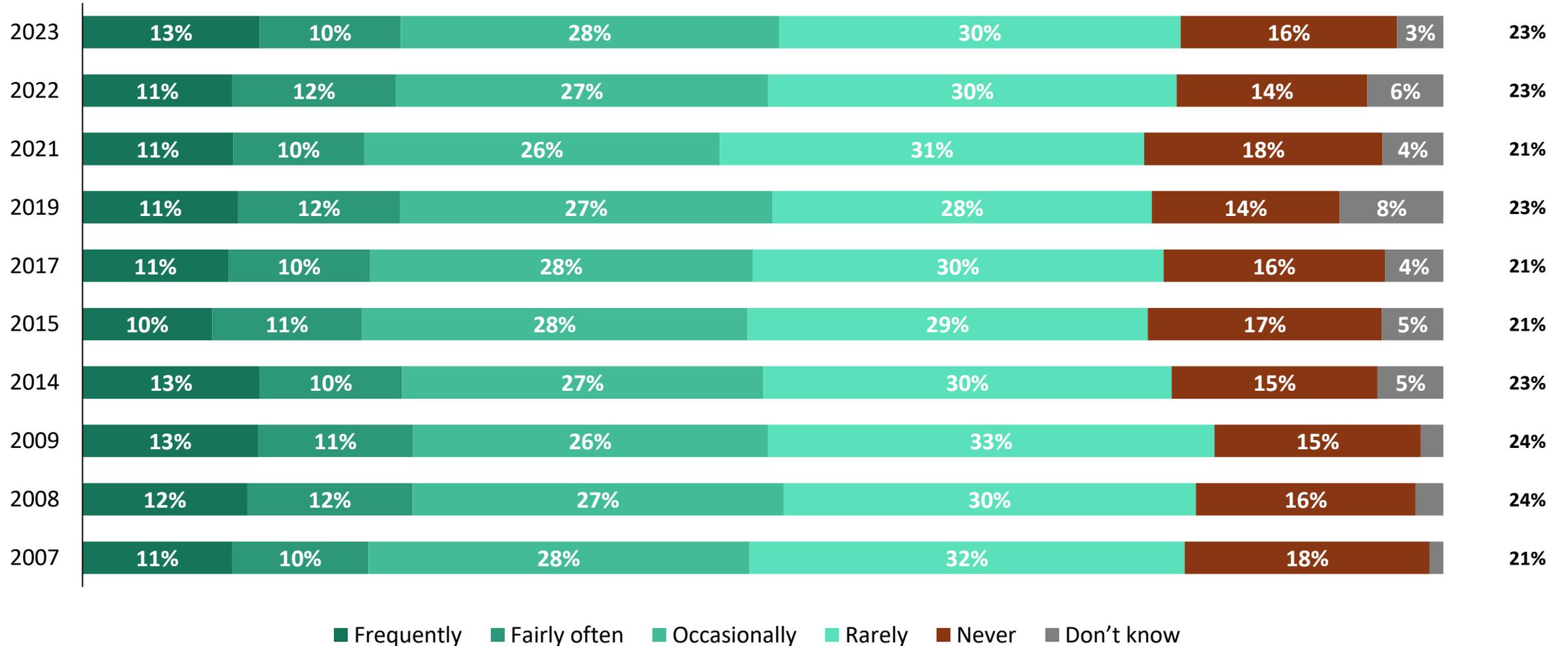
## Personal connection and contact with Indigenous peoples are stable over time



How often would you say you personally have contact with Canada's Indigenous peoples? Would that be...?

[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]

At Least Often

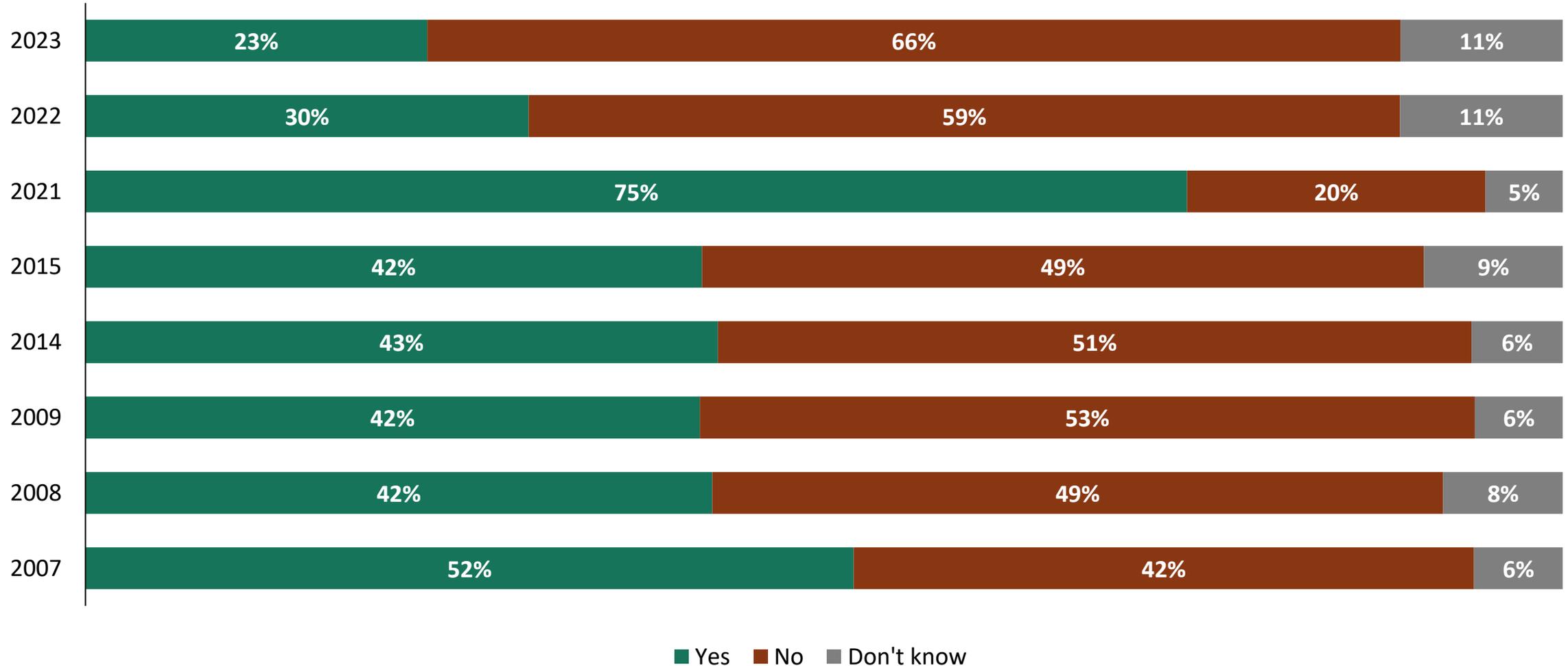


**Read, Seen, Heard**

# Read, Seen, Heard:

23% of respondents have read, seen or heard recently about Indigenous peoples, down 7 points since last year

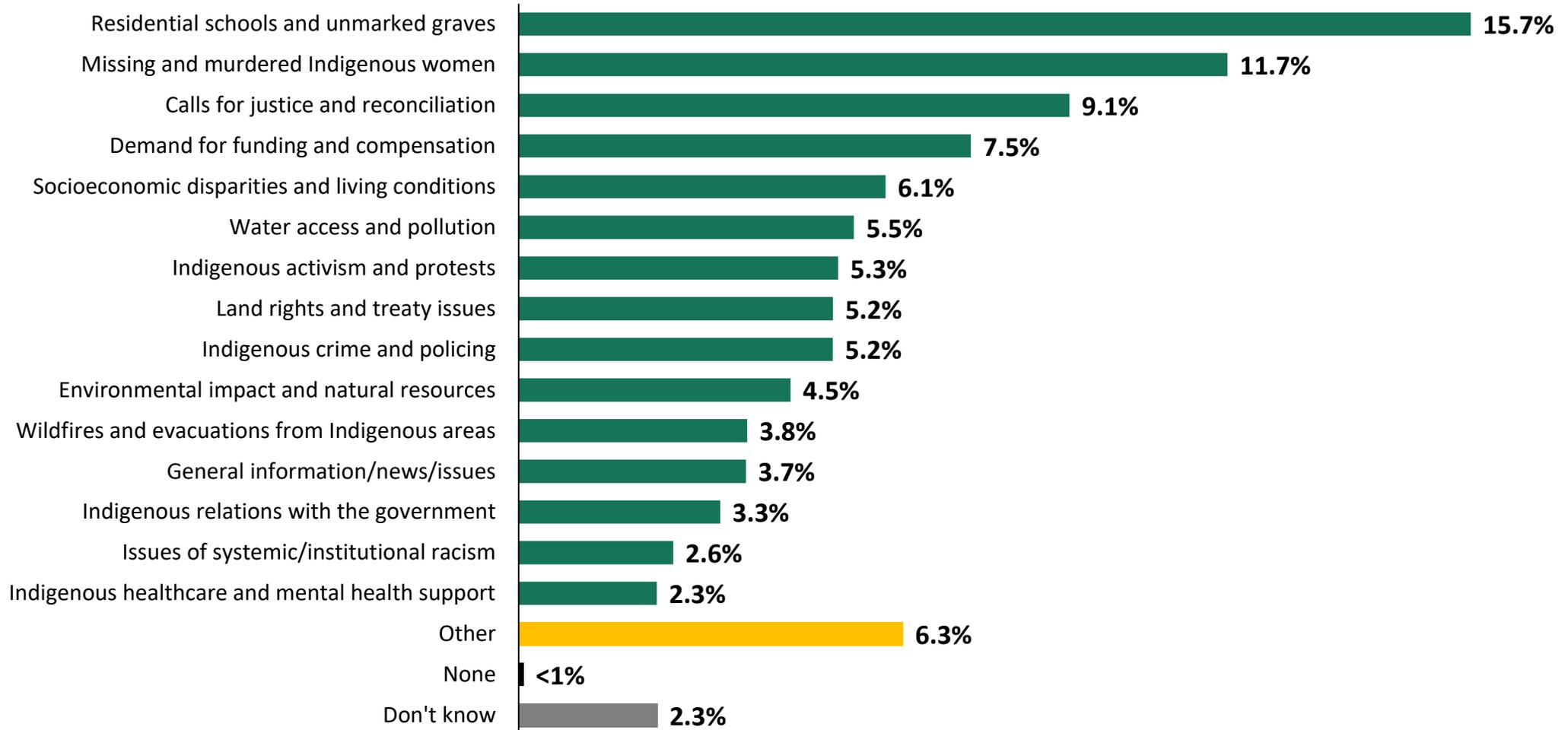
Q Have you read, seen or heard anything recently concerning Canada's Indigenous peoples?  
[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]



# Read, Seen, Heard (Open-Ended):

'Residential schools and unmarked graves' is the most common topic read, seen or heard with 16%

Q And what have you read, seen or heard recently regarding Canada's Indigenous peoples?  
[asked of those who have read, seen or heard, n=347]

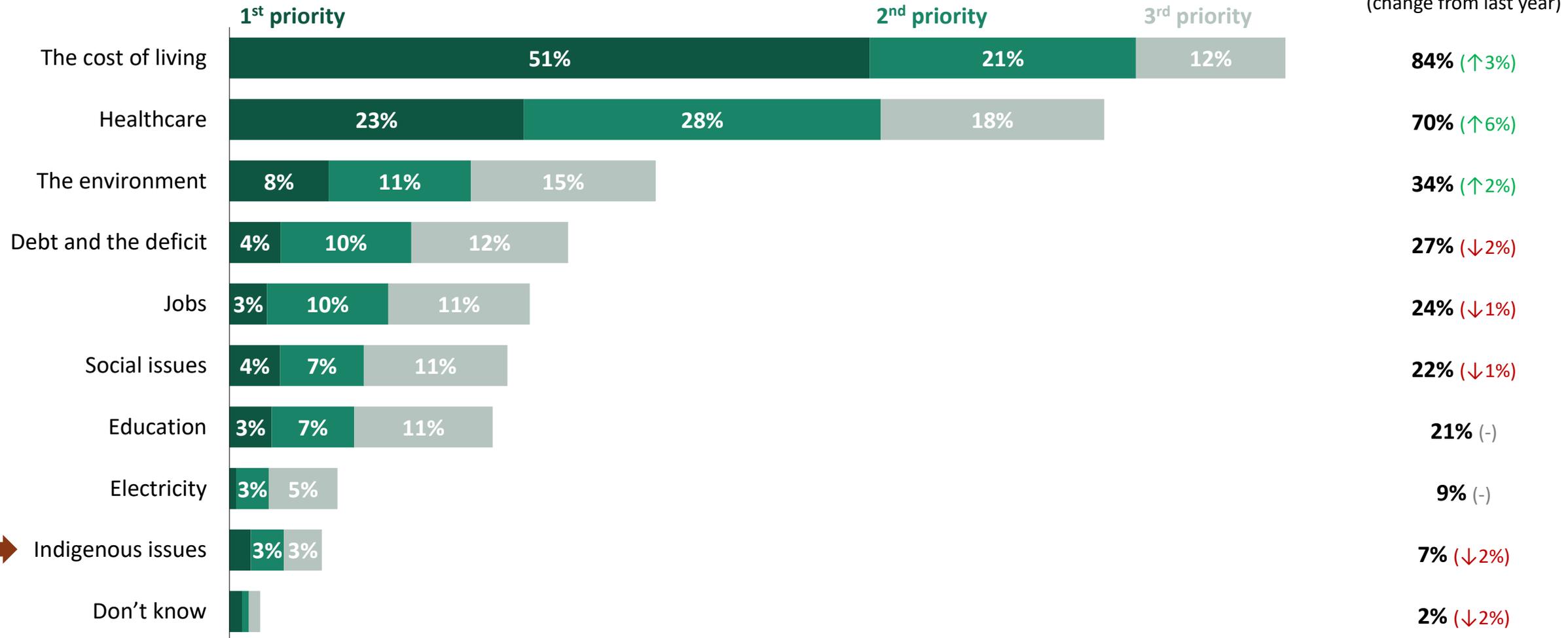


# **Indigenous Issues and Government Approval**

# Top-of-Mind Issues:

## Indigenous issues remain a low priority on Canadians' issue agenda

Q Which of the following issues is the most important issue to you? **[Top 3 Priorities]**  
[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]



Note: 'No response' not shown. Respondents who say 'Don't know' are not asked to name further priorities.

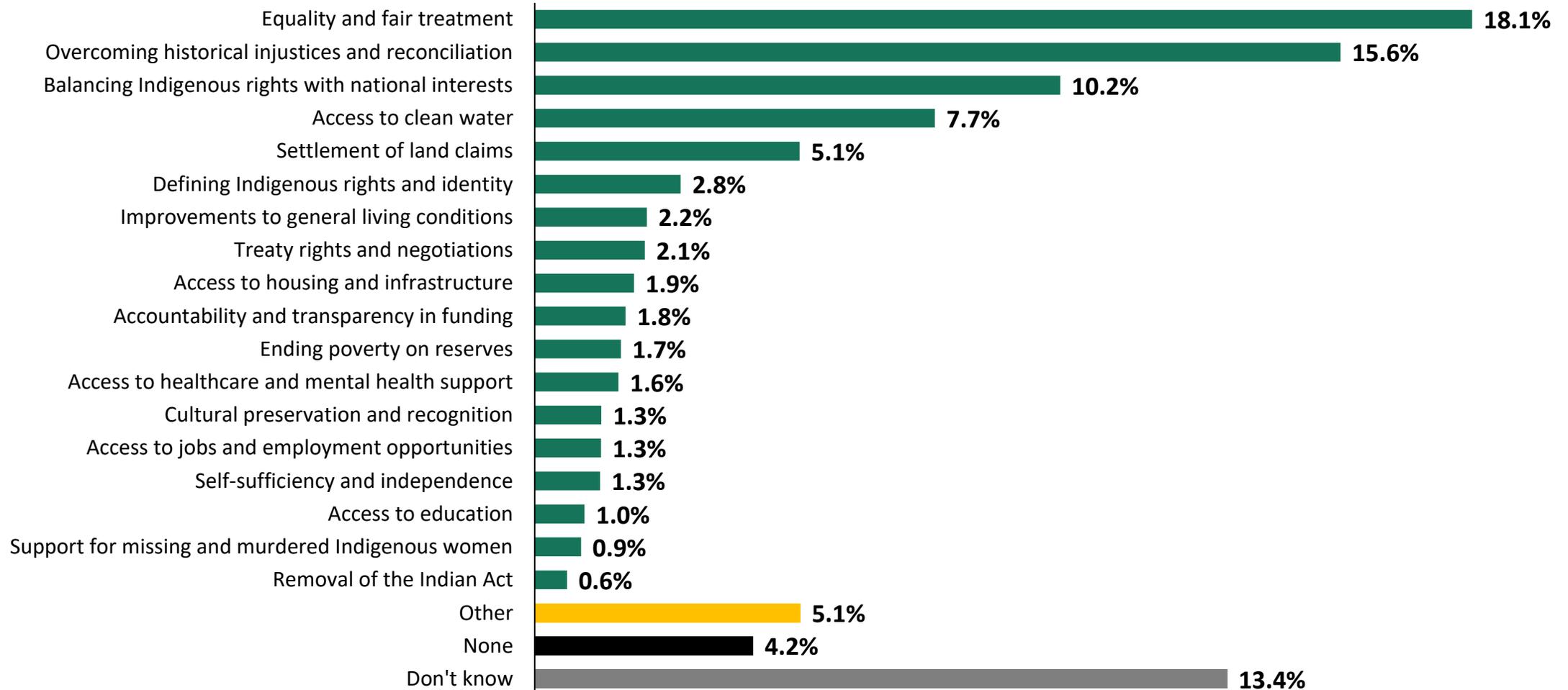
# Most Important Indigenous Issue:

'Equality and fair treatment' is a leading issue, followed by 'Overcoming historical injustices and reconciliation'



What do you feel is the most important issue facing the federal government when it comes to Canada's Indigenous peoples?

[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]



# Federal Government Approval:

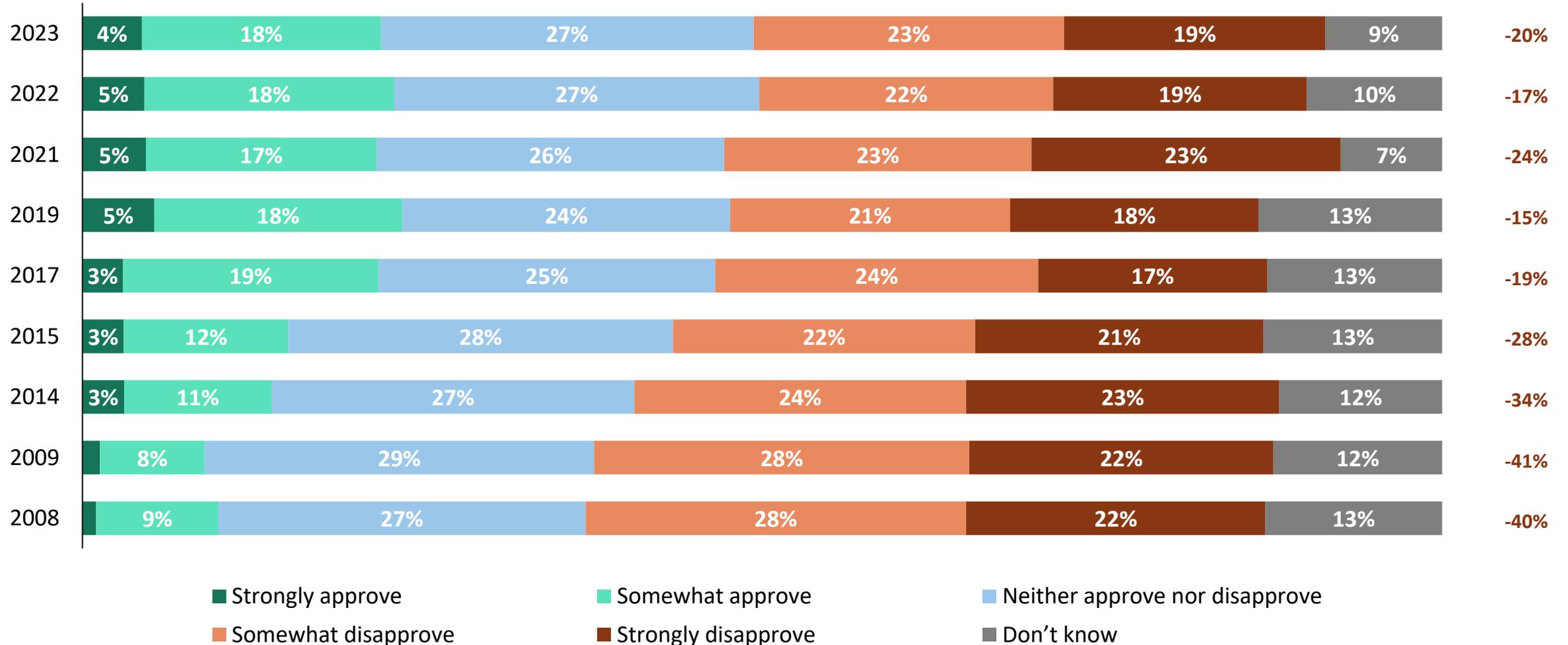
Net federal government approval down 3 points since last year, now at -20%



Do you approve or disapprove of the job the federal government is doing in managing Canada's Indigenous peoples' issues?

[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]

Net Approval



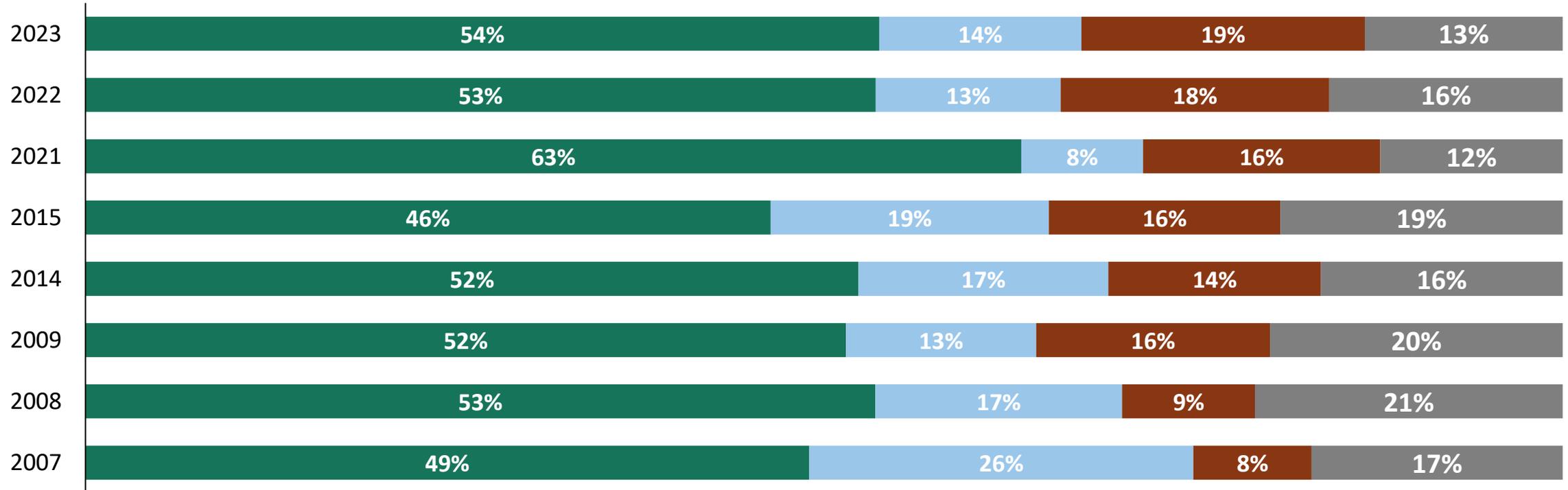
# Federal Government Responsibility:

Over half think the federal government should be doing more, same as last year



Regardless of who is responsible for the current situation facing Canada's Indigenous peoples, do you think the federal government...?

[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]



- Should be doing more to address the problems facing Canada's Indigenous peoples
- Is doing the right amount to address the problems facing Canada's Indigenous peoples
- Should be doing less to address the problems facing Canada's Indigenous peoples
- Don't know

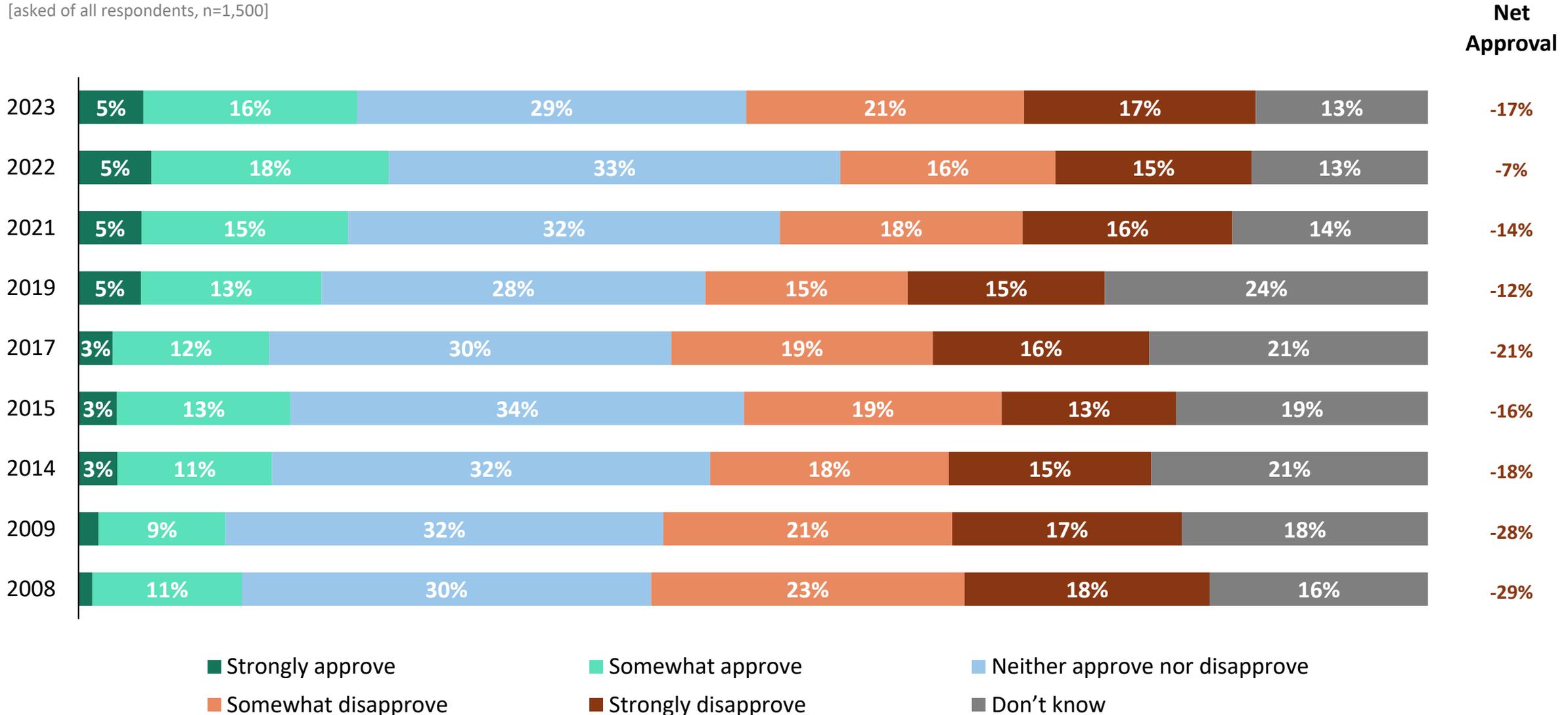
# Provincial Government Approval:

Net provincial government approval down 10 points since last year, now at -17%



Do you approve or disapprove of the job the provincial government is doing in managing Canada's Indigenous peoples' issues?

[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]



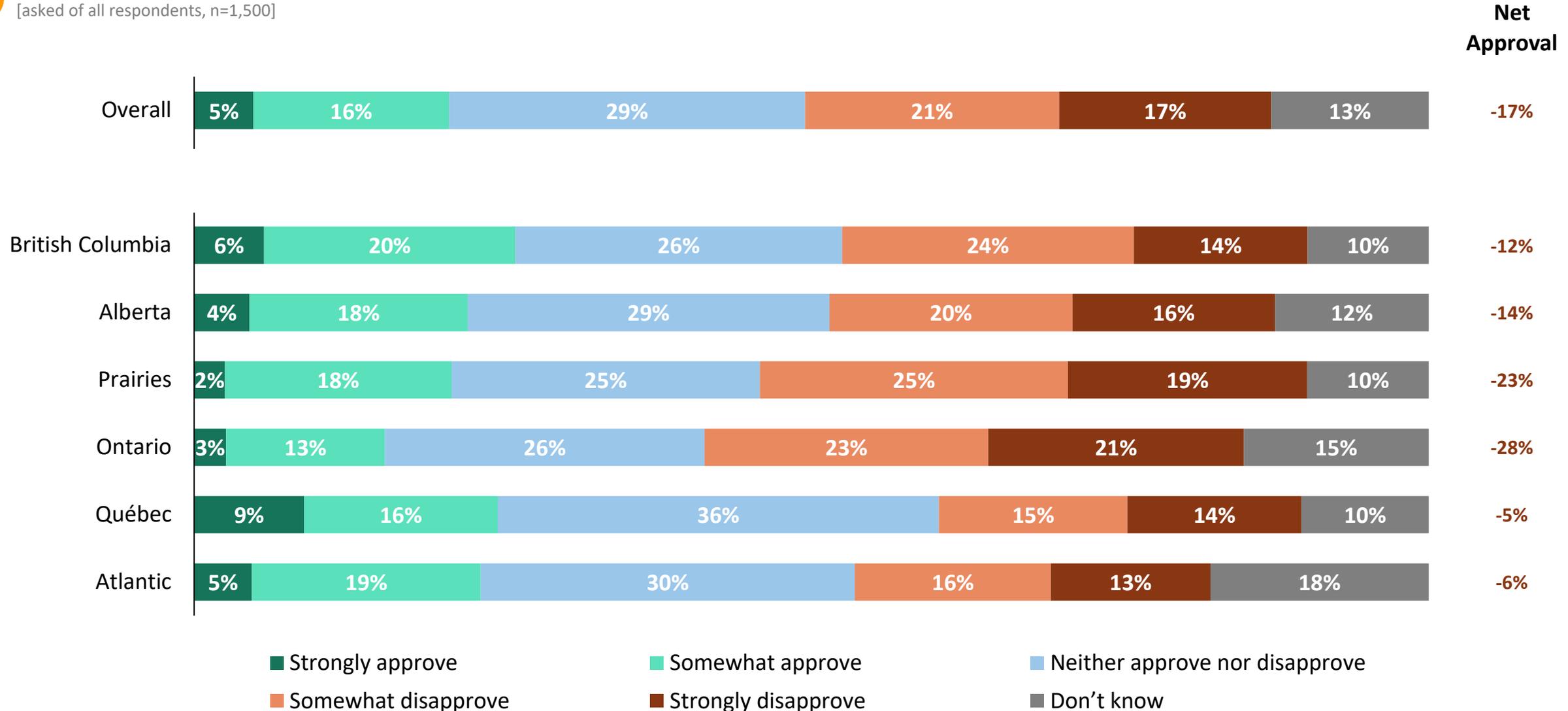
# Provincial Government Approval by Region:

Net approval is negative across provinces, lowest in Ontario and Prairies



Do you approve or disapprove of the job the provincial government is doing in managing Canada's Indigenous peoples' issues?

[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]



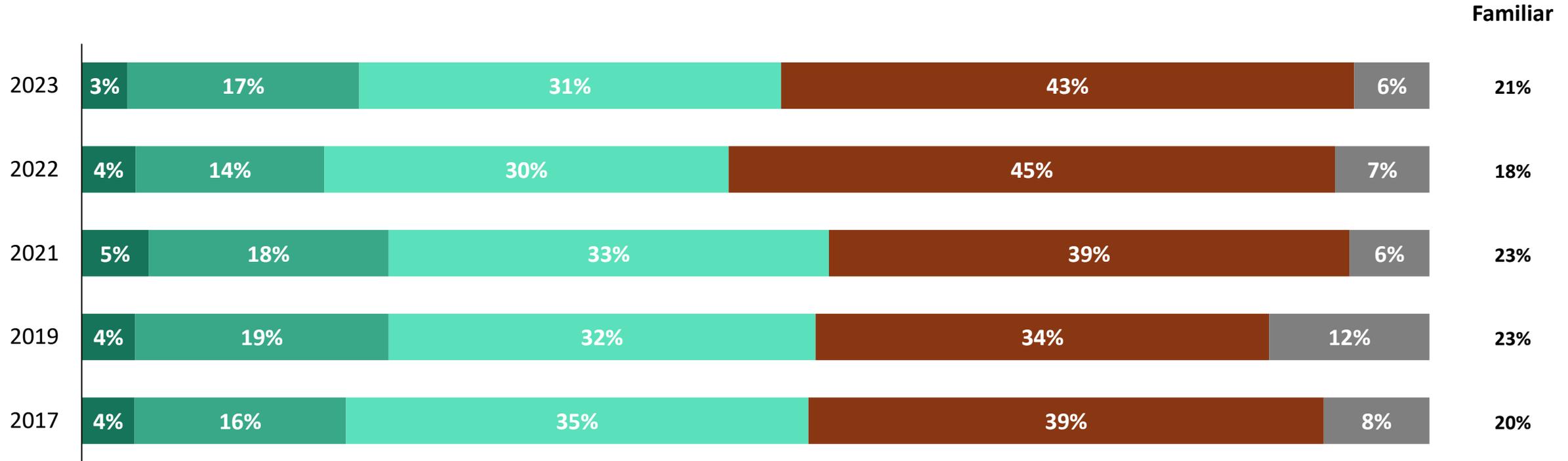
# **United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**

# Familiarity:

Only 1-in-5 are familiar with UNDRIP; half have not heard about it or don't know



How familiar are you with the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**, a set of recommendations drafted at the UN to help guide how governments interact with Indigenous peoples?  
[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]



- I am very familiar and can explain the details of the UNDRIP in detail to others
- I am somewhat familiar, but cannot explain the UNDRIP in detail to others
- I have heard of the UNDRIP before, but don't know much about it
- I have not heard of the UNDRIP before this survey
- Don't know

# Support:

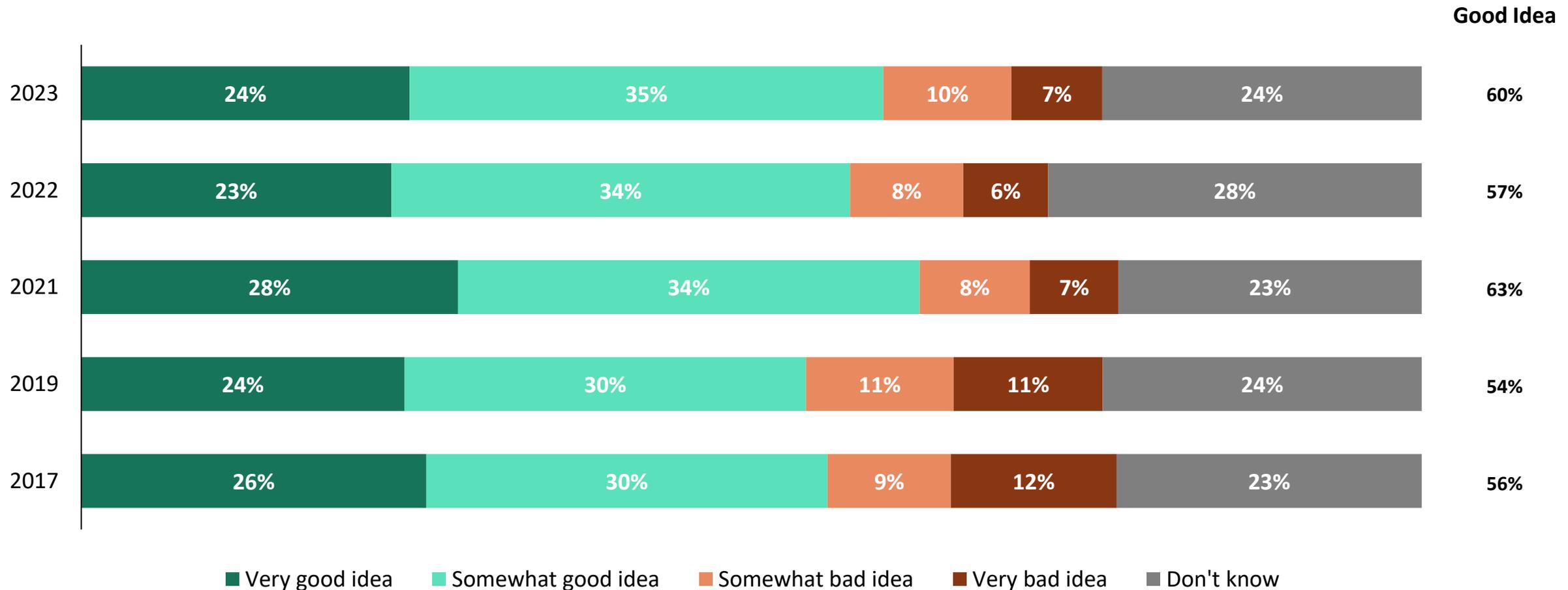
## 3-in-5 think fully adopting and implementing UNDRIP is a good idea, steady since last year



The UN declaration includes language that would require “free, prior and informed consent” of Indigenous groups in Canada before adopting and policies that may affect them. On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Canada’s Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, announced that Canada would fully adopt and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Do you think fully adopting and implementing **the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** is a good idea or a bad idea?

[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]

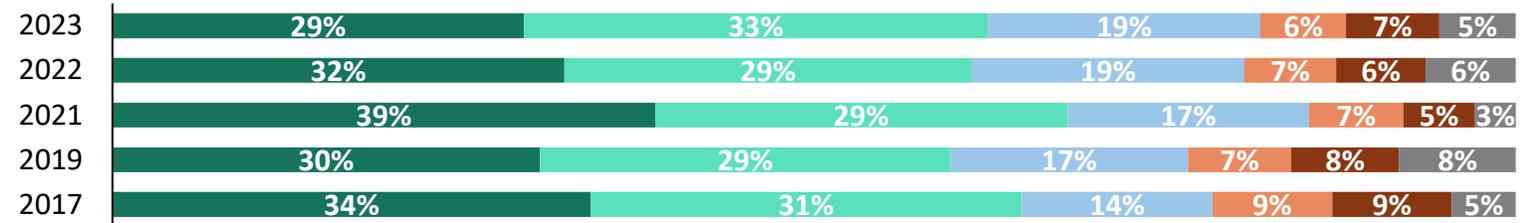


# Attitudes and Values – Moral Obligations:

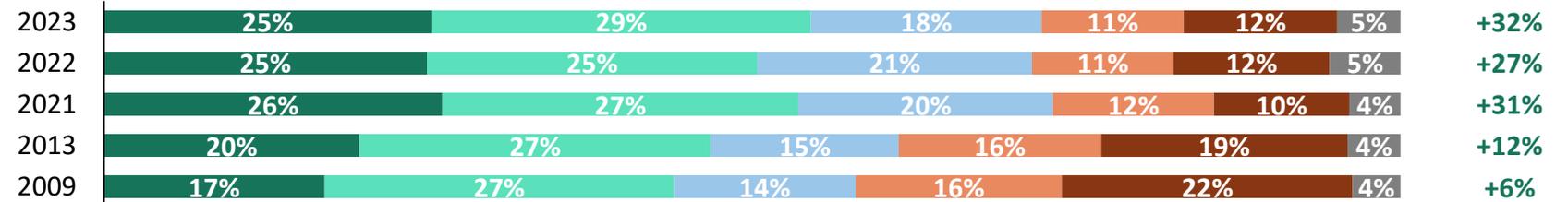
Canadians' sense of moral obligation towards Indigenous peoples has slipped since 2021

**Q** Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements about the UN declaration:  
[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]

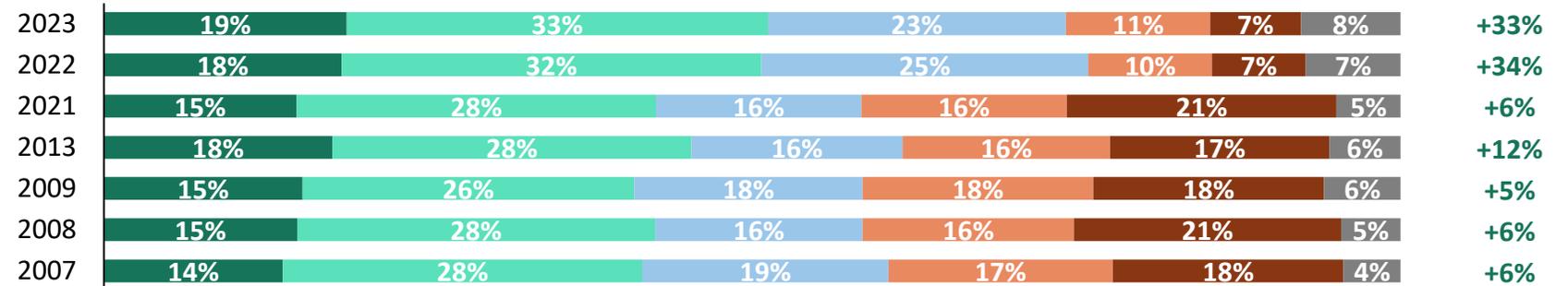
Canadians have a duty to help resolve the massive inequalities that Indigenous people face in Canada.



Indigenous peoples were here first; they deserve compensation for the injustices they suffered when they lost their lands.



Government efforts on behalf of Indigenous Canadians have failed badly, so it makes sense for Indigenous people to take control of their own affairs.



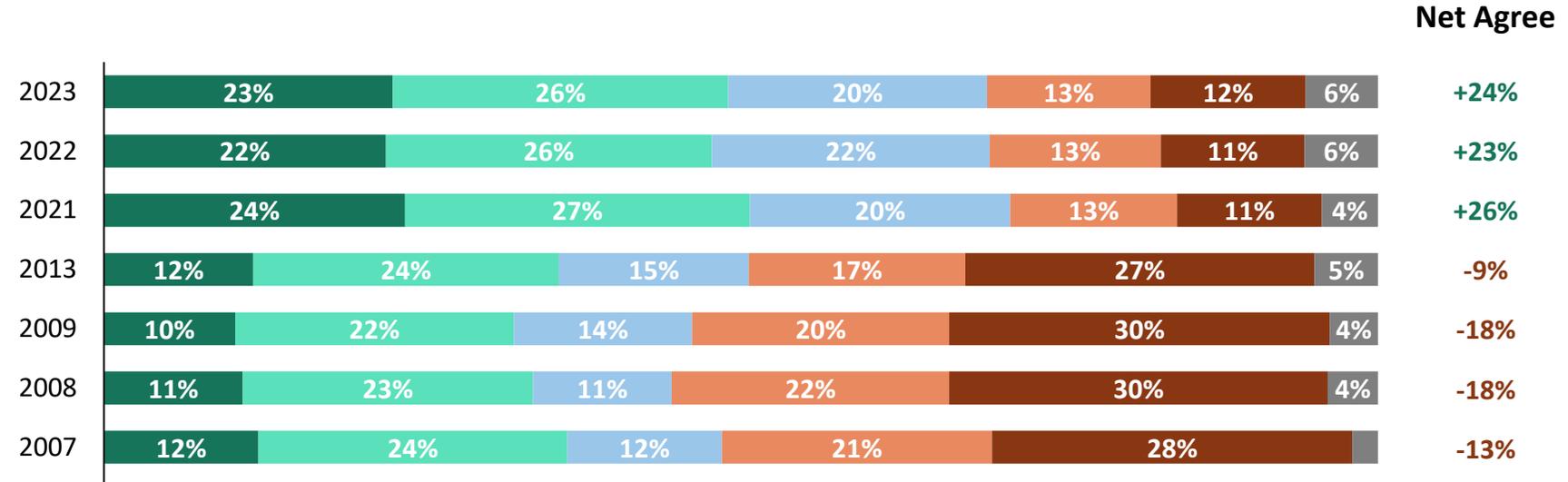
■ Strongly agree     
 ■ Somewhat agree     
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree  
■ Somewhat disagree     
 ■ Strongly disagree     
 ■ Don't know

# Attitudes and Values – Rights:

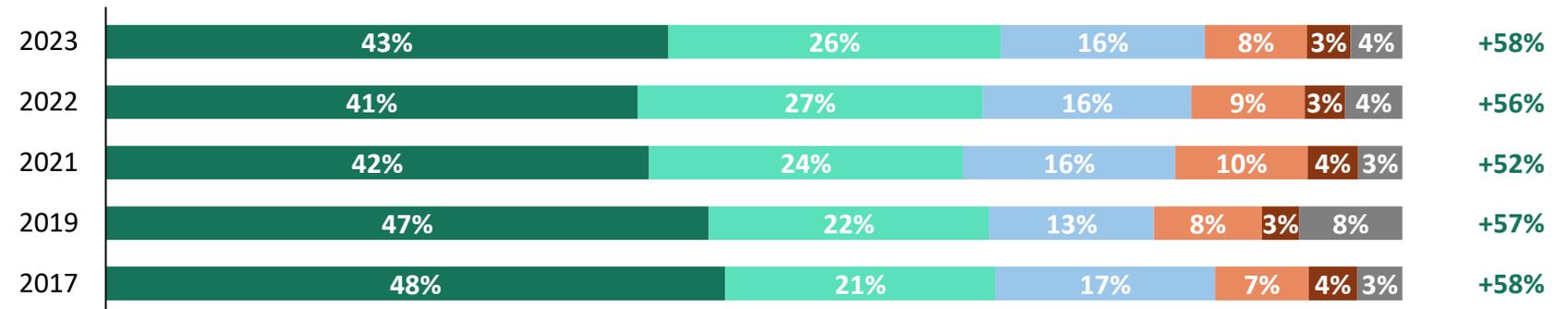
A sharp increase in *special treatment* net agreement in 2021 has held stable over the past two years

**Q** Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements about the UN declaration:  
[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]

Indigenous peoples should have the rights and status they need to protect their culture and heritage, even if it means they may have certain rights other Canadians do not have.



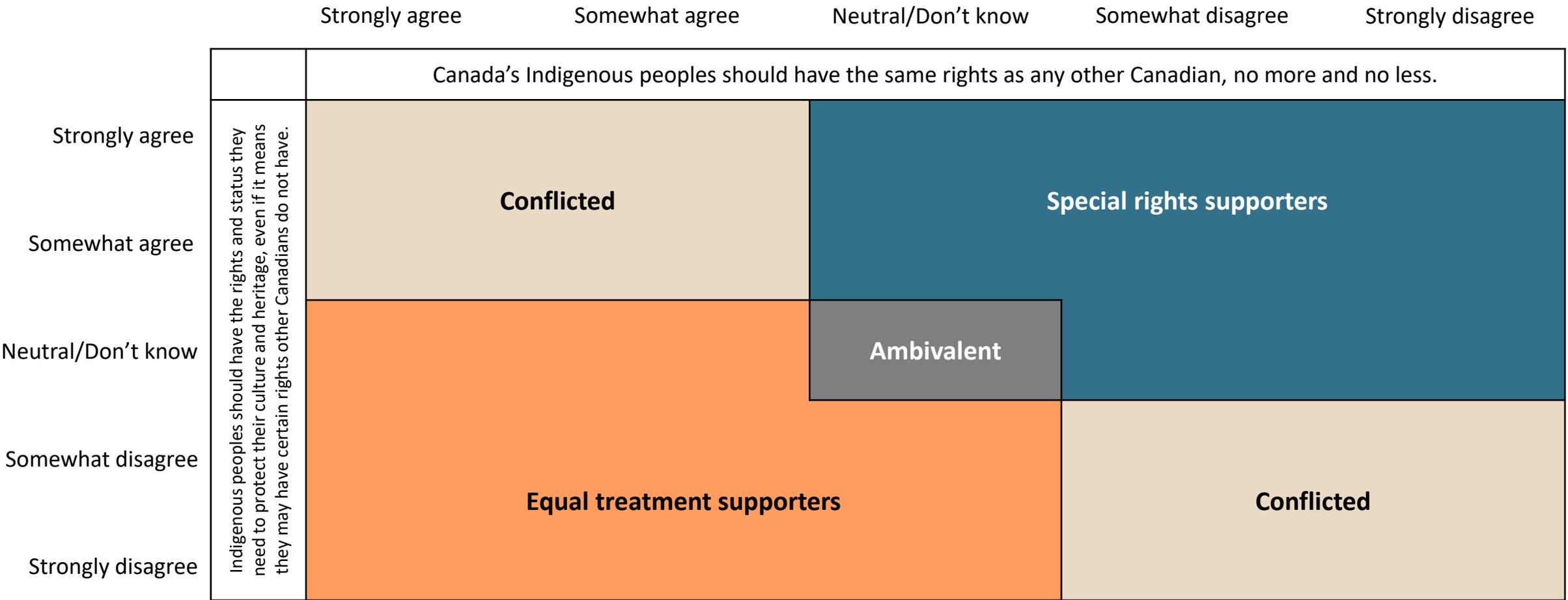
Canada's Indigenous peoples should have the same rights as any other Canadian, no more and no less.



■ Strongly agree     
 ■ Somewhat agree     
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree  
■ Somewhat disagree     
 ■ Strongly disagree     
 ■ Don't know

# Indigenous Attitudes Segmentation:

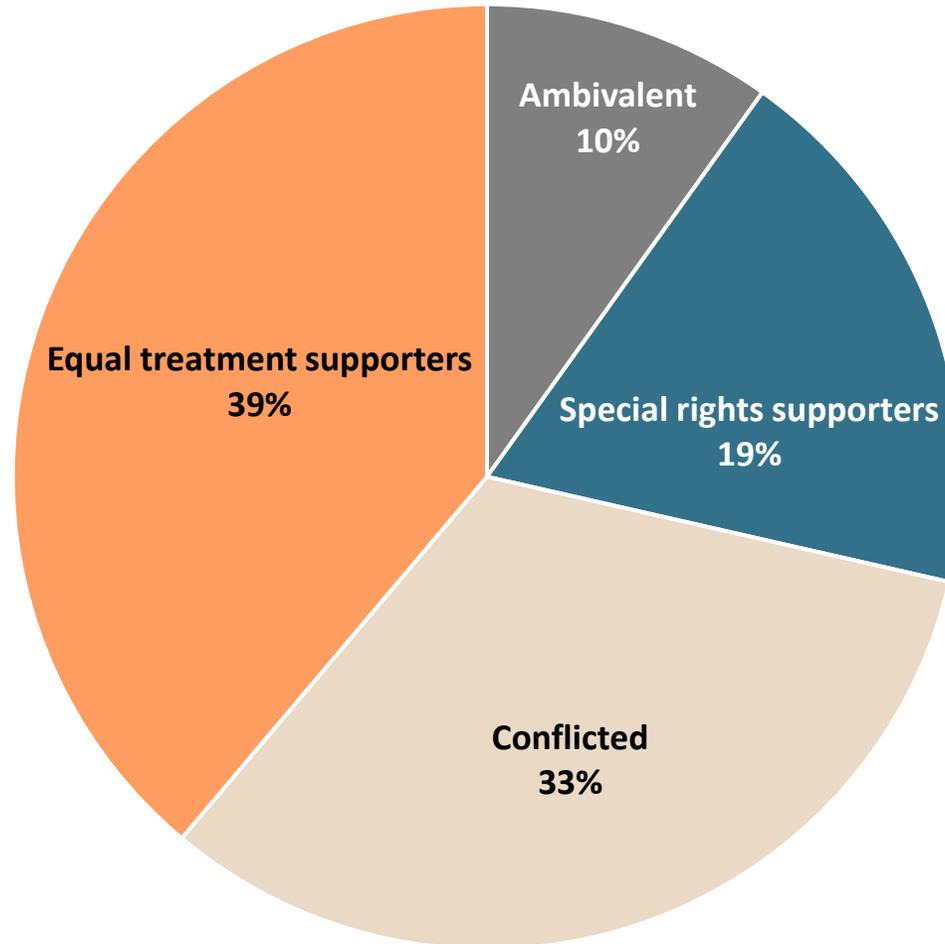
Based on the two statements “Canada’s Indigenous peoples should have the same rights as any other Canadian, no more and no less” and “Indigenous peoples should have the rights and status they need to protect their culture and heritage, even if it means they may have certain rights other Canadians do not have,” we have segmented the population by their attitudes towards Indigenous rights.



# Indigenous Attitudes Segmentation:

*39% are equal treatment supporters, 19% are special rights supporters, 33% are conflicted, and 10% are ambivalent*

Based on the two statements “Canada’s Indigenous peoples should have the same rights as any other Canadian, no more and no less” and “Indigenous peoples should have the rights and status they need to protect their culture and heritage, even if it means they may have certain rights other Canadians do not have,” we have segmented the population by their attitudes towards Indigenous rights.



# Moral Obligations by Indigenous Attitudes Segmentation:

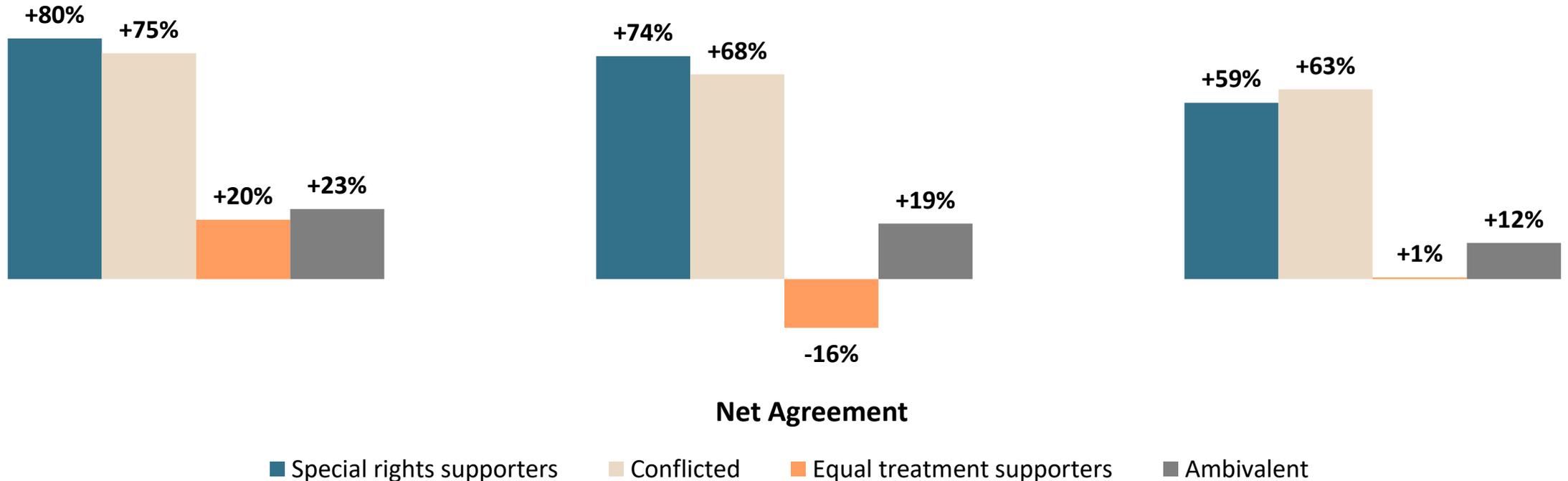
*Special rights supporters far more likely than equal treatment supporters to sense moral obligations*

Q Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements about the UN declaration:  
[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]

Canadians have a duty to help resolve the massive inequalities that Indigenous people face in Canada.

Indigenous peoples were here first; they deserve compensation for the injustices they suffered when they lost their lands.

Government efforts on behalf of Indigenous Canadians have failed badly, so it makes sense for Indigenous people to take control of their own affairs.

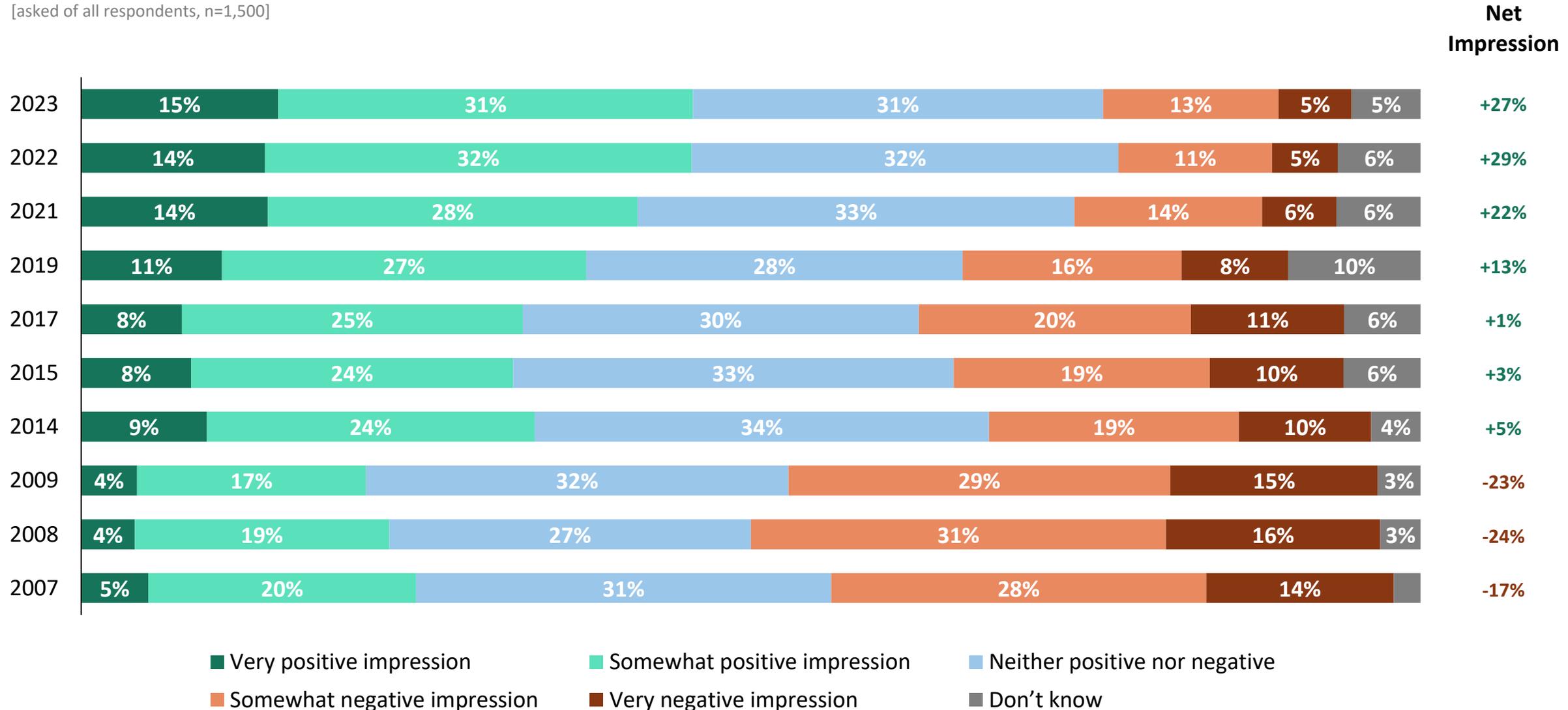


# Indigenous Impression

# Impression:

Net impression on Indigenous peoples' organizations steady at +27%, a rise of 44 points since 2007

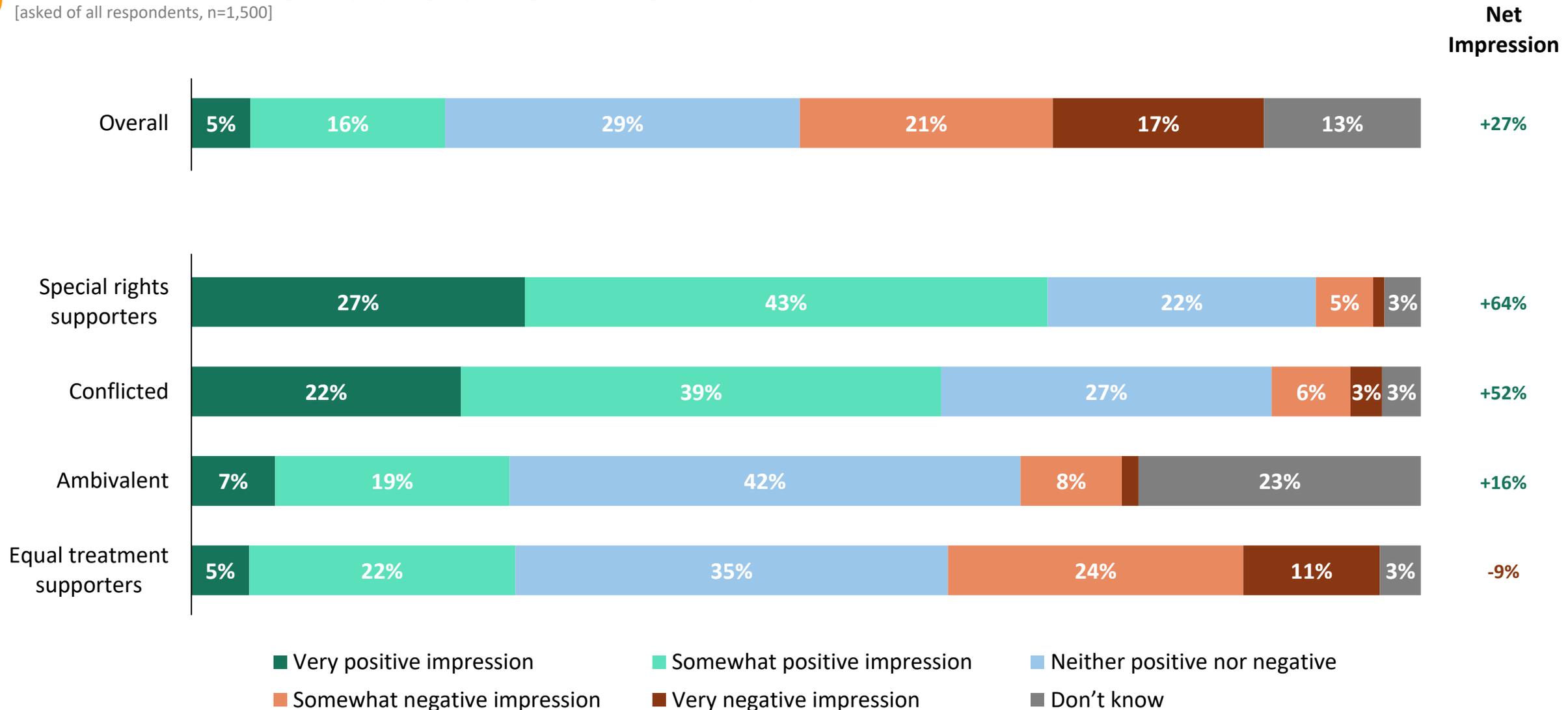
Q When you think of Canada's Indigenous peoples' groups or organizations in general, do you have a...?  
[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]



# Impression by Indigenous Attitudes Segmentation:

*Special rights supporters far more likely than equal treatment supporters to have a positive impression*

Q When you think of Canada's Indigenous peoples' groups or organizations in general, do you have a...?  
[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]



# Methodology

# Survey Methodology



**These are the results of an online survey conducted between May 11<sup>th</sup> and May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

**Method:** This online survey was conducted using INNOVATIVE's Canada 20/20 national research panel with additional respondents from Lucid, a leading provider of online samples. Each survey is administered to a series of randomly selected samples from the panel and weighted to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample.

**Sample Size:** n=2,682 Canadian citizens, 18 years or older. The results are nationally weighted to n=1,500 based on Census data from Statistics Canada.

**Field Dates:** May 11<sup>th</sup> and May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Weighting:** Results for Canada are weighted by age, gender, region, education, and party identification to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual population according to Census data; in order to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Weighted and unweighted frequencies are reported in the table.

**Margin of Error:** This is a representative sample. However, since the online survey was not a random probability-based sample, a margin of error cannot be calculated. Statements about margins of sampling error or population estimates do not apply to most online panels.

**Note:** Graphs may not always total 100% due to rounding values rather than any error in data. Sums are added before rounding numbers.

	Unweighted (n)	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (n)	Weighted (%)
<b>Men 18-34</b>	257	9.6%	208	14.0%
<b>Men 35-54</b>	323	12.1%	236	15.9%
<b>Men 55+</b>	646	24.2%	282	19.0%
<b>Women 18-34</b>	378	14.2%	202	13.6%
<b>Women 35-54</b>	435	16.3%	244	16.4%
<b>Women 55+</b>	626	23.5%	314	21.1%
<b>Region</b>				
<b>BC</b>	432	16.1%	210	14.0%
<b>AB</b>	375	14.0%	168	11.2%
<b>Prairies</b>	198	7.4%	95	6.4%
<b>ON</b>	1022	38.1%	583	38.9%
<b>QC</b>	416	15.5%	343	22.9%
<b>Atlantic</b>	239	8.9%	101	6.7%



For more information, please contact:

**Greg Lyle**

President

(416) 642-6429

[glyle@innovativeresearch.ca](mailto:glyle@innovativeresearch.ca)

**Giorgi Buzaladze**

Research Analyst

(364) 275-3913

[gbuzaladze@innovativeresearch.ca](mailto:gbuzaladze@innovativeresearch.ca)

**Building Understanding.**

