

**Governance  
Institute**  
of Australia

**Ai**

# ETHICS INDEX 2024

*AI Supplementary Report*

# FAQ's

## What is the Ethics Index?

The Ethics Index is an annual nationwide survey now in its ninth year that examines perceptions of ethical issues and conduct in Australian society. The survey provides a snapshot of what Australians believe to be the most and least ethical occupations, organisations and sectors, plus the top ethical challenges of the future. It measures the population's overall view on how important ethics is to a well-functioning society, the view on the ethical importance of each of the broad sectors of society and the actual perception of ethical behaviour in those same sectors.

## Who conducts the survey and when was it conducted?

The independent research is conducted by Ipsos on behalf of the Governance Institute of Australia and surveys 1000 people weighted according to age, gender and location so that it closely represents demographic makeup of the Australian adult population. This year's survey was conducted in **September 2024**.

## Why measure Ethics?

Ethics is at the base of all decision-making and good governance is decision-making within a sound ethical framework. To know what ethical behaviour the population expects and whether that same audience believes that they are getting that level of behaviour means that the first necessary step must be to measure both and then report them.

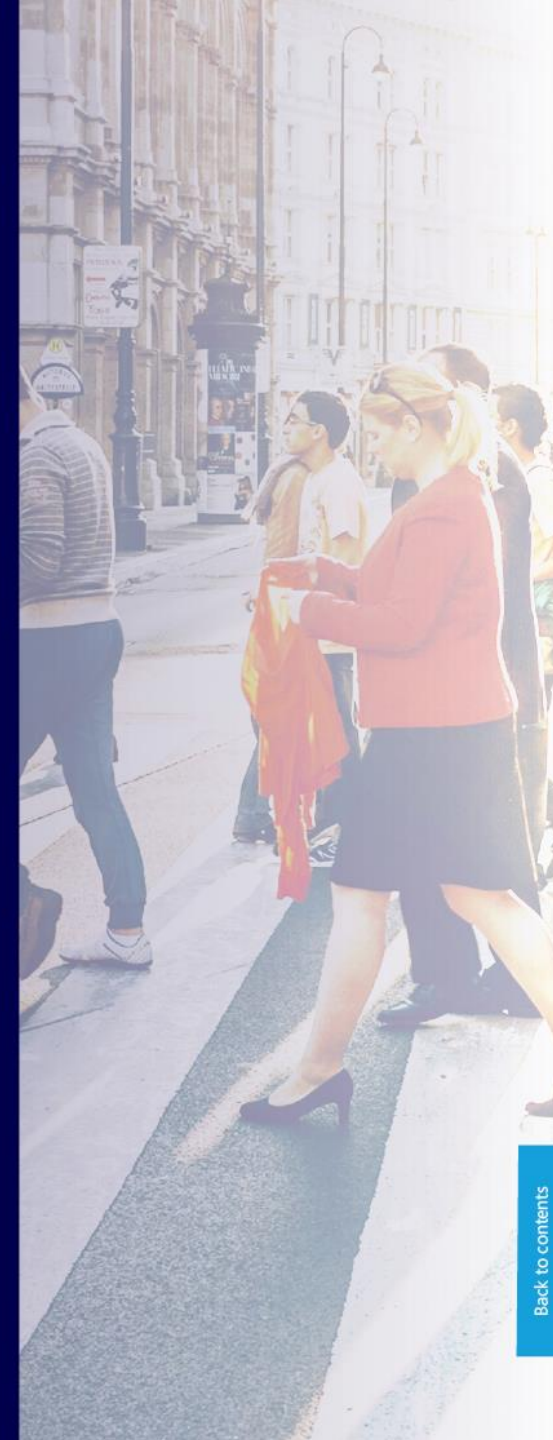
## How is the Ethics Index score calculated?

All base questions are asked on a scale of *Very Unethical, Somewhat Unethical, Neither Unethical or Ethical, Somewhat Ethical, Very Ethical and No Opinion*. The scale is important when it comes to applying the algorithm and then produces the net score. Topical questions do vary the scale and sometimes ask for choices or rankings but these answers do not form part of the Index calculations.

## What is the Ethics Index score?

The Ethics Index Score is an analysis of data from the entire Ethics Index survey to quantify people's perception of the level of ethical behaviour in our society.

- **Overall Importance of Ethics score:** The proportion of respondents who viewed ethics as important or very important in society less those who viewed ethics as unimportant or very unimportant.
- **Ethics Expectation Deficit:** The gap between our expectations of how ethical something should be and how ethical we think something actually is. A smaller gap is an indicator that society is performing as we want/expect it to.
- **Net score:** Percentage of responses rating somewhat ethical or very ethical minus percentage of responses rating somewhat unethical or very unethical.





# Executive Summary

This supplementary report is focussed on a suite of qualitative questions specifically relating to the AI Industry. It provides an in-depth analysis of how different groups responded and highlights key areas that effect the perceived ethical reputation of the AI industry.

## Key Findings

### General Sentiment Towards AI:

- **Positive Overall:** Most people have a favourable opinion about AI, with positive sentiment increasing with greater use.
- **Uncertainty:** Nearly 40% of respondents are uncertain about AI.
- **Mixed Feelings:** While many see AI's utility, societal views on its development are somewhat divided, leaning slightly towards negativity.
- **Lack of Knowledge:** The main reason for uncertainty is a lack of understanding about AI, presenting a significant opportunity for education.
- **Concerns:** Misuse of AI and job replacement are major worries among the most apprehensive individuals.
- **Education:** Enhancing knowledge about AI can significantly improve public sentiment.
- **Engagement:** Active engagement with AI leads to more positive views.
- **Targeted Information:** Delivering information on platforms where people seek content is crucial.
- **Low Engagement:** Only 22% of respondents use AI regularly or daily, indicating a large potential for increased engagement.

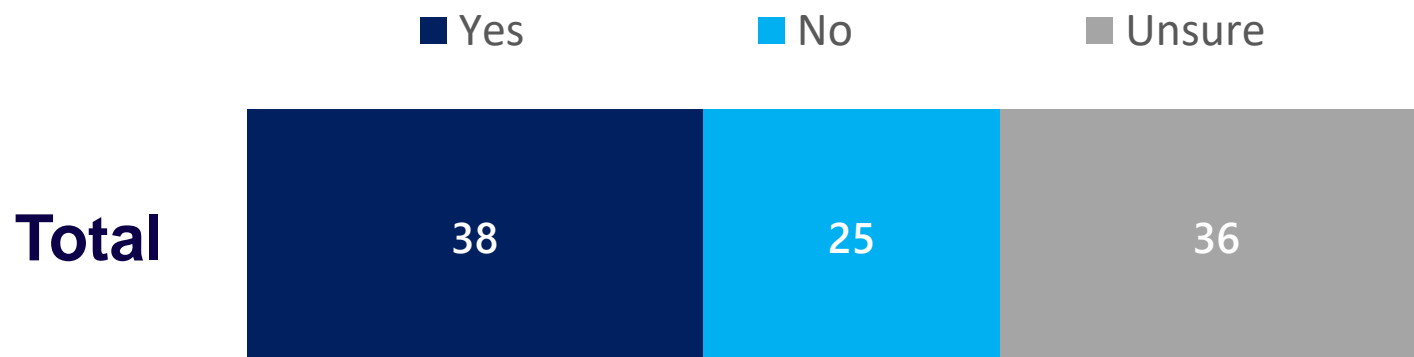


## Recommendations for organisations

- Develop specific strategies to enhance public understanding and engagement with AI, particularly focusing on ethical transparency and experiential learning.
- Emphasise the necessity for education, reassurance, and experiential engagement to maintain and enhance the current positive perception of AI use.
- Use social media as a significant channel for disseminating AI-related content, while recognising the importance of experiential learning to overcome barriers associated with AI.
- Create a 'safe' environment or 'sandbox' for individuals to explore AI.
- Enhance transparency around AI applications by providing clarity on human involvement and offering avenues to question AI-driven decisions.

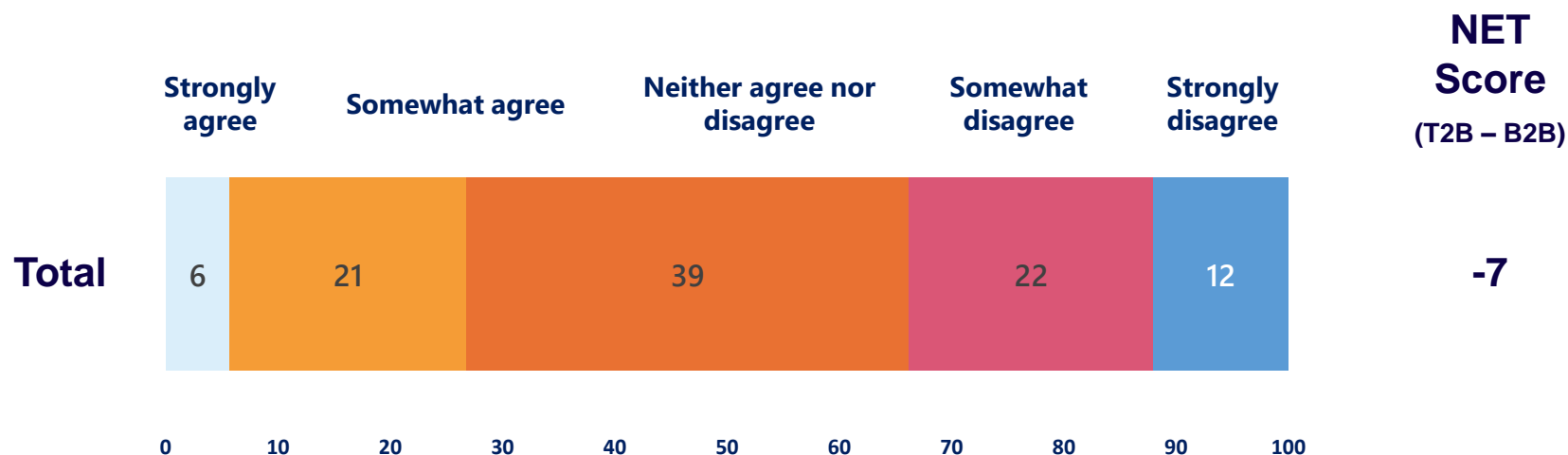
# Overall opinion of AI

On a positive note, those with an opinion view the use of AI favourably. However, almost 40% remain uncertain. To maintain and strengthen this positive perception, education, reassurance and hands-on experience will be crucial.



# Sentiment - Development of AI in an Ethical way

Despite the positive views on AI's use, societal sentiment about AI's development is polarising, with a slight tendency towards negativity.



# Ethical behaviour of organisations who are using AI

Broad perceptions of the ethics involved in societal use of AI in organisations is not strong. Education and experience play a significant role in shaping expectations around the use of AI in organisations. Interestingly, active engagement leads to a more substantial positive perception shift. With only 22% saying they use it regularly or every day, there is a significant opportunity to increase engagement. Women are more likely to perceive AI as being unethical (-25) compared to men (-6).

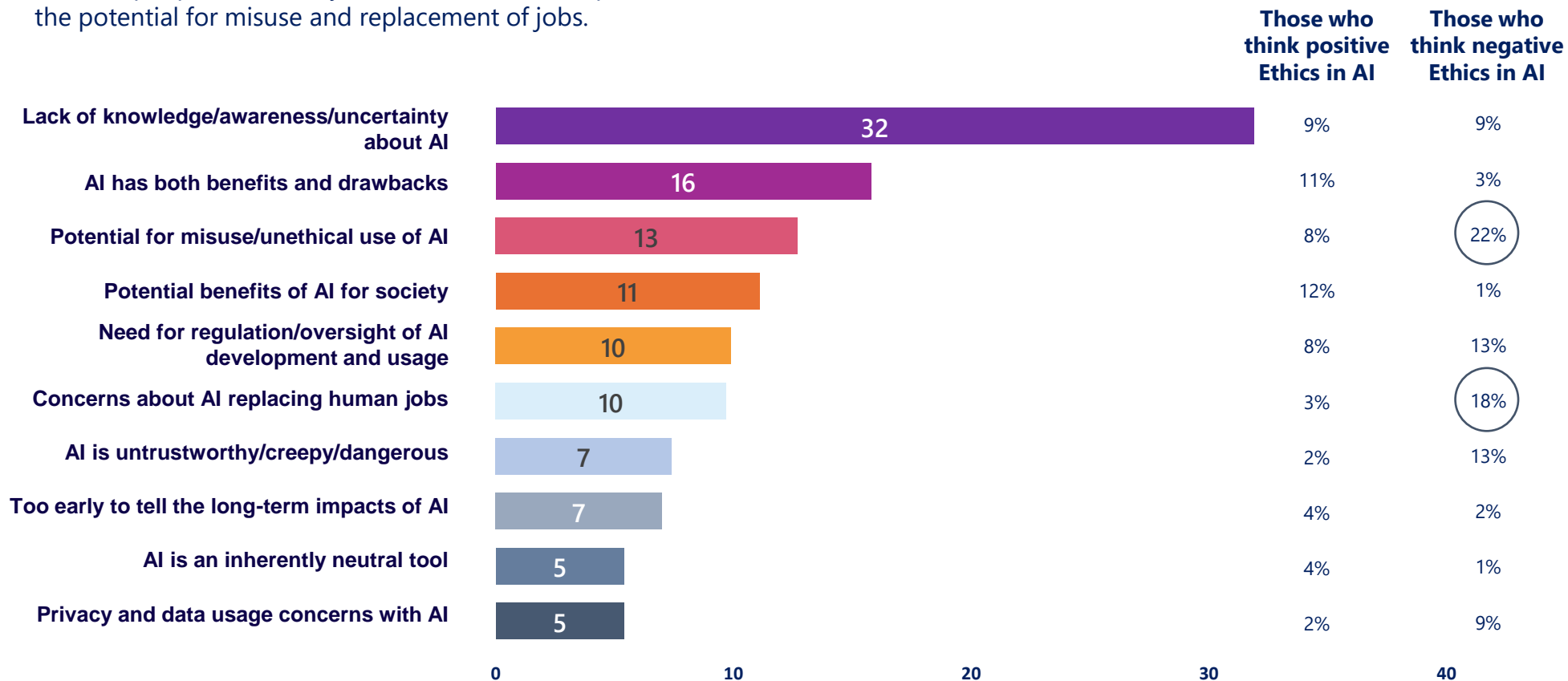


A11. When considering the organisations who are currently using AI, how would you rate the level of ethical behaviour being displayed? A13. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements – “I feel knowledgeable about Artificial Intelligence and its use”? (T2B = Strongly agree & Somewhat agree) A14. Which of the following would you classify as your current involvement with AI? (T2B = I use it all the time & I use it regularly but not every day) A15. Do you think the use of Artificial Intelligence is a good thing?

Base: Australians 18-65, Ethics Index 2024 (n=1000)

# Level of ethical behaviour of organisations using AI

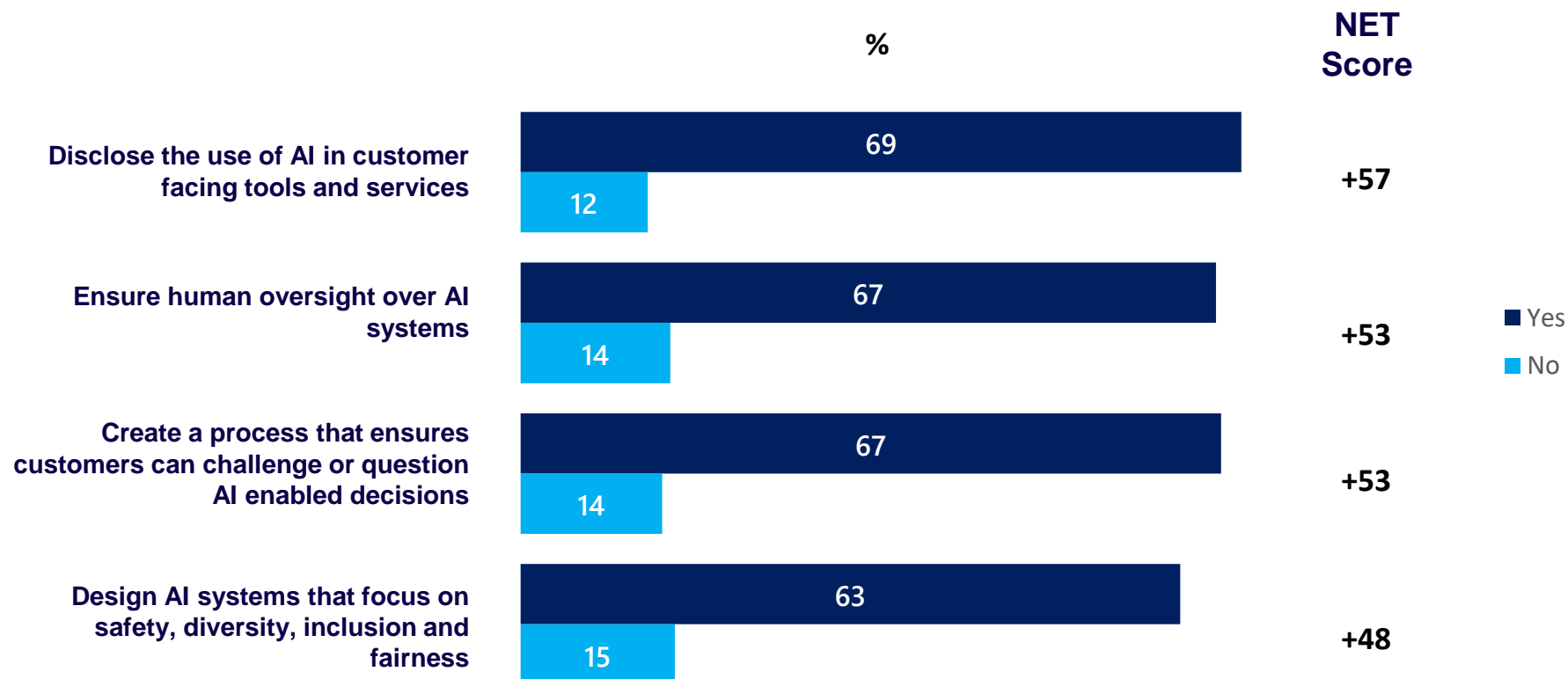
The main issue is a lack of knowledge, leading to uncertainty, about AI. This presents a key opportunity for education. It's crucial to reach people where they seek information and provide relevant content. For those most concerned with AI the main issues are the potential for misuse and replacement of jobs.



A12. You gave a rating of [ANSWER FROM A11] for your opinion of the ethical behaviour displayed in the use of AI in society, why do you say that?  
 A11. When considering the organisations who are currently using AI, how would you rate the level of ethical behaviour being displayed? (T2B = Somewhat ethical & Very ethical, B2B = Very unethical & Somewhat unethical)  
 Base: Australians 18-65, Ethics Index 2024 (Total n=1000, T2B n=249, B2B n=402)  
 NB: Coding generated and quantified using AI

# Ethical AI Practices in Organisations

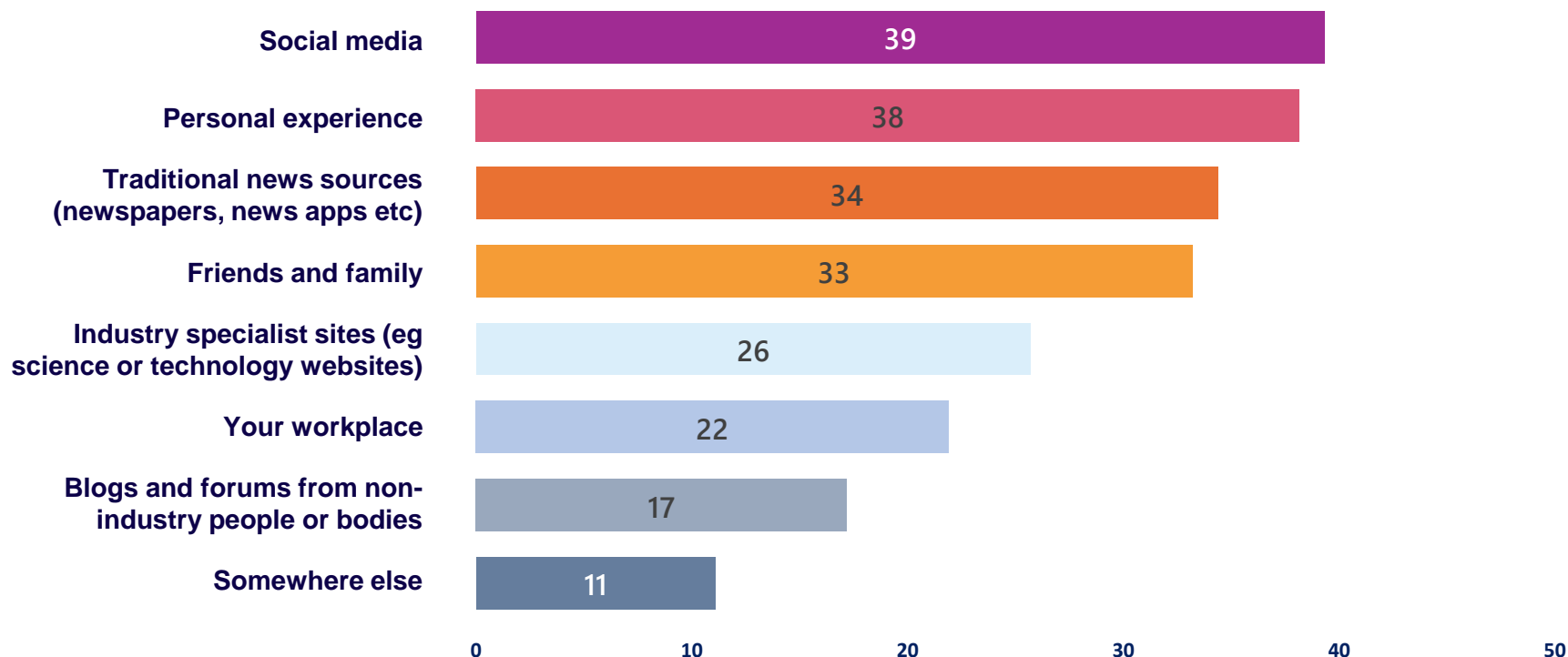
Organisations can help reduce uncertainty in several ways. Increasing transparency around AI use is a top priority. Providing greater clarity and assurance around human involvement, along with the ability to question AI-generated decisions, would also be beneficial.





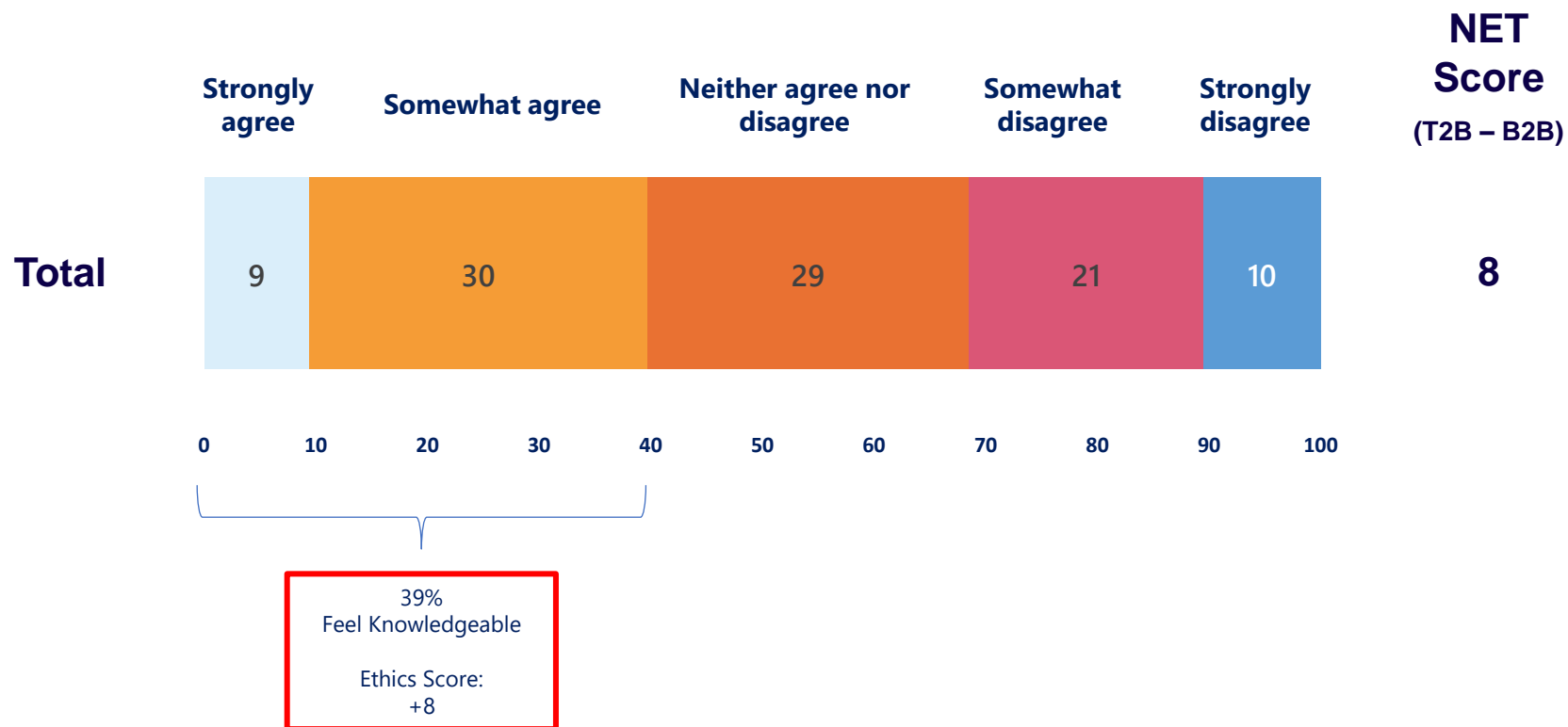
# Key Influences on AI Ethics

While information sources are diverse, social media serves as a key vehicle for delivering content. However, it is important to remember that hands-on experience is crucial in overcoming barriers associated with AI. A consideration may be how to create a sandpit that people can learn about AI in a 'safe' way?



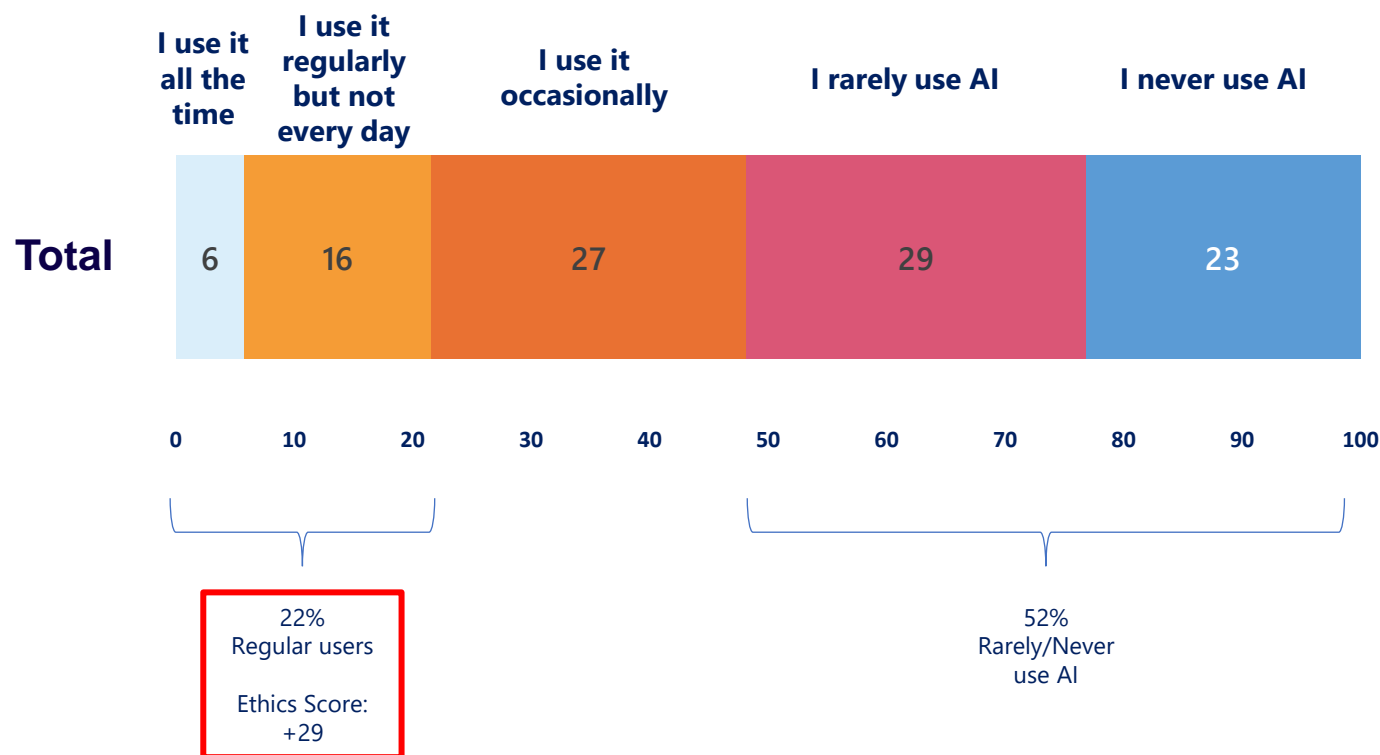
# Knowledge about Artificial Intelligence and its use

Educational is a critical step in the process.



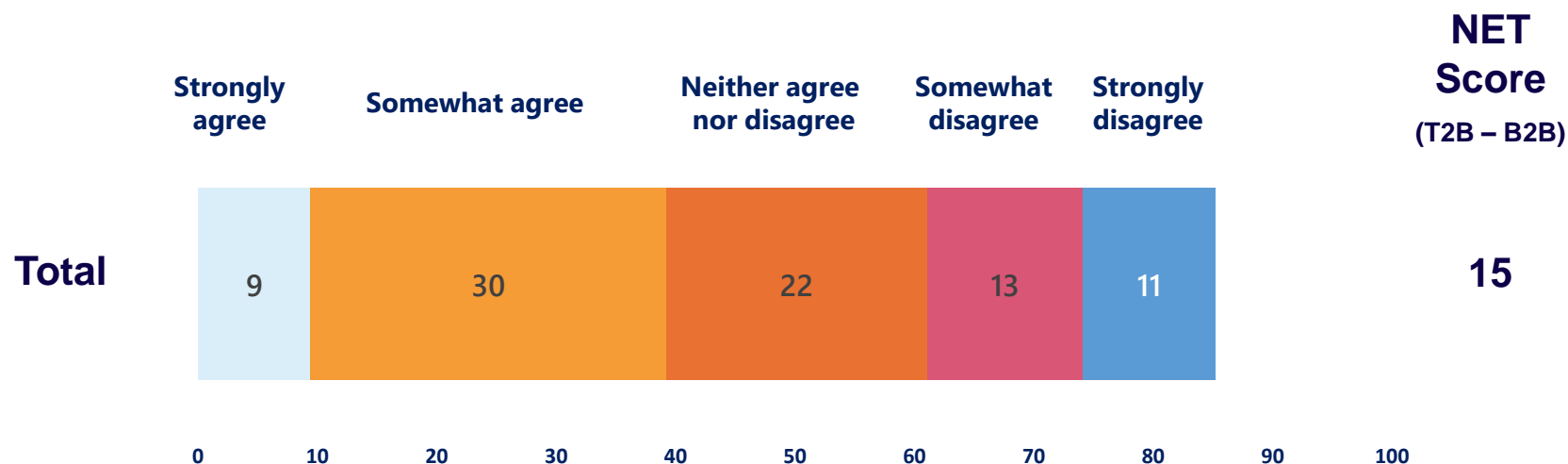
# Involvement with AI

...but active involvement is critical to improving (and demystifying) ethical perceptions. With only 22% regularly using AI, this represents a sizable opportunity to increase engagement



# AI Benefits vs Ethics

The sentiment around the benefits that AI will bring is positive, despite ethical concerns. However, the level of strong commitment (i.e. "strongly agree") is not high, reflecting the overall uncertainty about AI. Additional activities, both content and experiential learning, could help drive a stronger, more confident perception.





# About Governance Institute

A national membership association, Governance Institute of Australia advocates for a community of **governance and risk management professionals**, equipping our members with the tools to drive better governance within their organisation.

We tailor our resources for members in the listed, unlisted and not-for-profit sectors, and ensure our member's voice is heard loudly.

As the **only Australian provider of chartered governance accreditation**, we offer a range of short courses, certificates and postgraduate study through the **Governance Academy** to help further the knowledge and education of the fast-growing governance and risk management profession.

We run a strong program of thought leadership, research projects and news publications and draw upon our membership of the Chartered Governance Institute to monitor emerging global trends and challenges to ensure our members are prepared.

Our members know that governance is at the core of every organisation — and in these tumultuous times, that good governance is more important than ever before.

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