



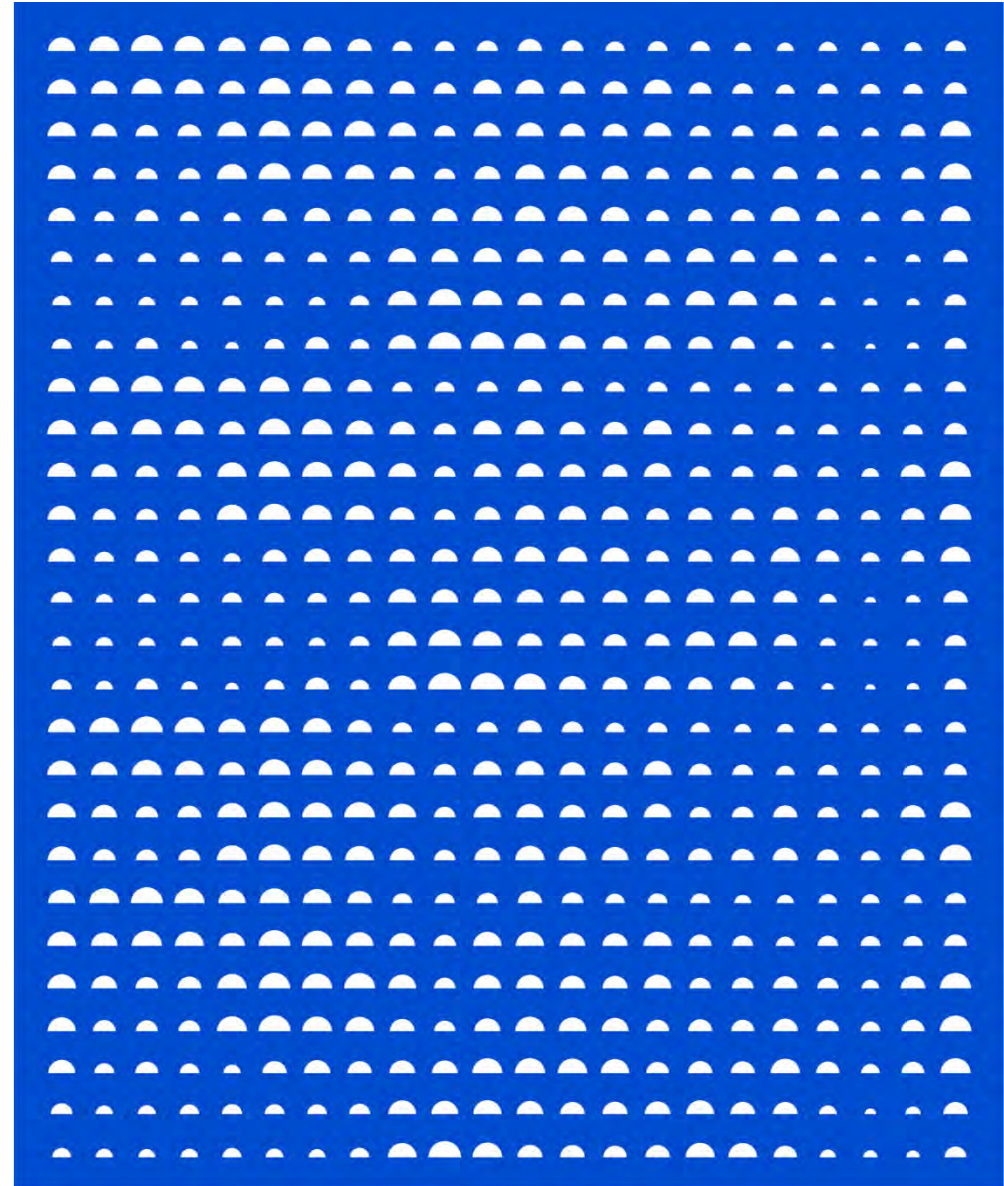
Social
Research
Centre



Life in
Australia™

Using knock-to-nudge methods for recruitment to a probability-based online panel: findings from Australia

Current Innovations in Probability-Based
Household Internet Panel Research conference
Center for Economic and Social Research
Washington, D.C.
February 26–27, 2026



Authors and acknowledgements

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our company is located and the Nacotchtank and Piscataway people on whose traditional lands we are today, and pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

The Social Research Centre is committed to honoring First Nations peoples' ongoing unique cultural and spiritual connections to the land, water and seas and their rich contribution to society.

We extend our respects to all First Nations peoples.

Life in Australia™: a brief methodological history

Panel basics

- Established 2016
- Panel size: 3,322 → 10,000

Recruitment

- 2016 (dual-frame RDD, CATI)
- 2018 (cell phone only [CPO] RDD, CATI)
- 2019–21 (ABS, mail push-to-web + CATI option)
- 2020 (CPO RDD, IVR)
- 2020–21, 2023–25 (CPO RDD, text-to-web)





01

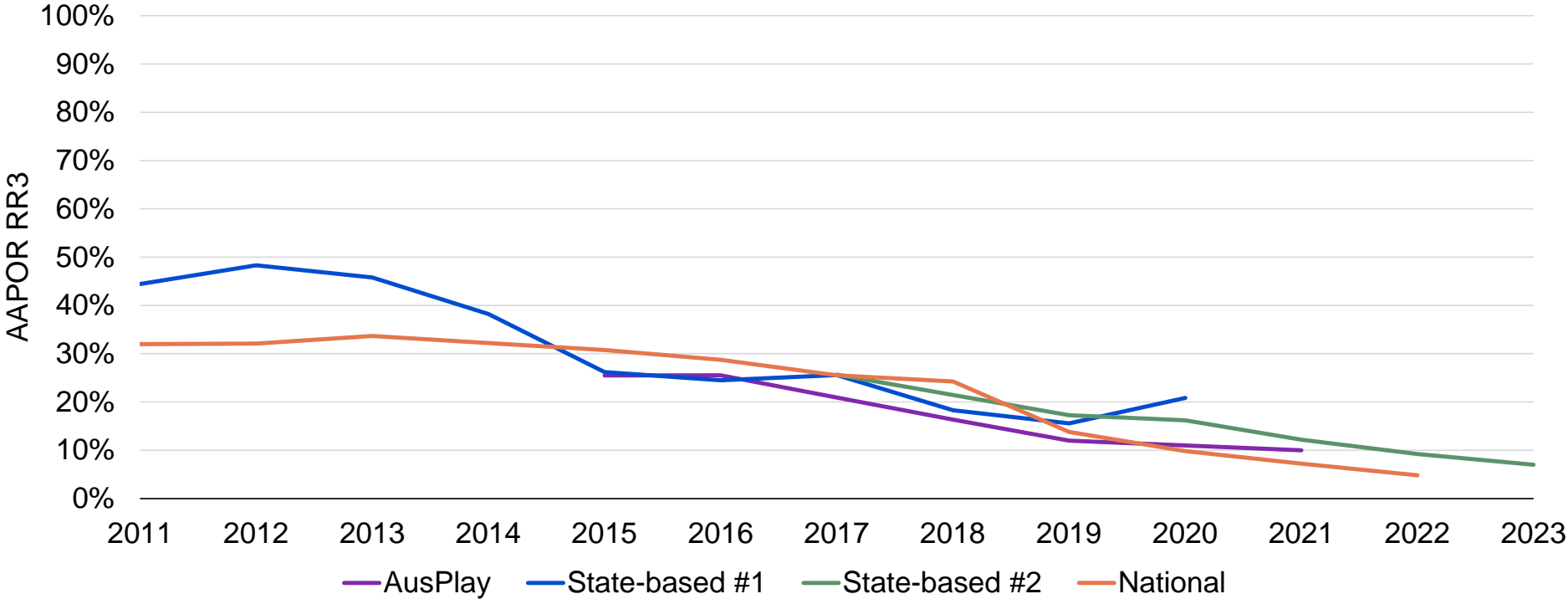
Challenges

Pain points

- Client price shopping against opt-in panels
- Under-represented populations
 - Younger adults
 - Males
 - Less educated
 - Politically unaligned, nonvoters

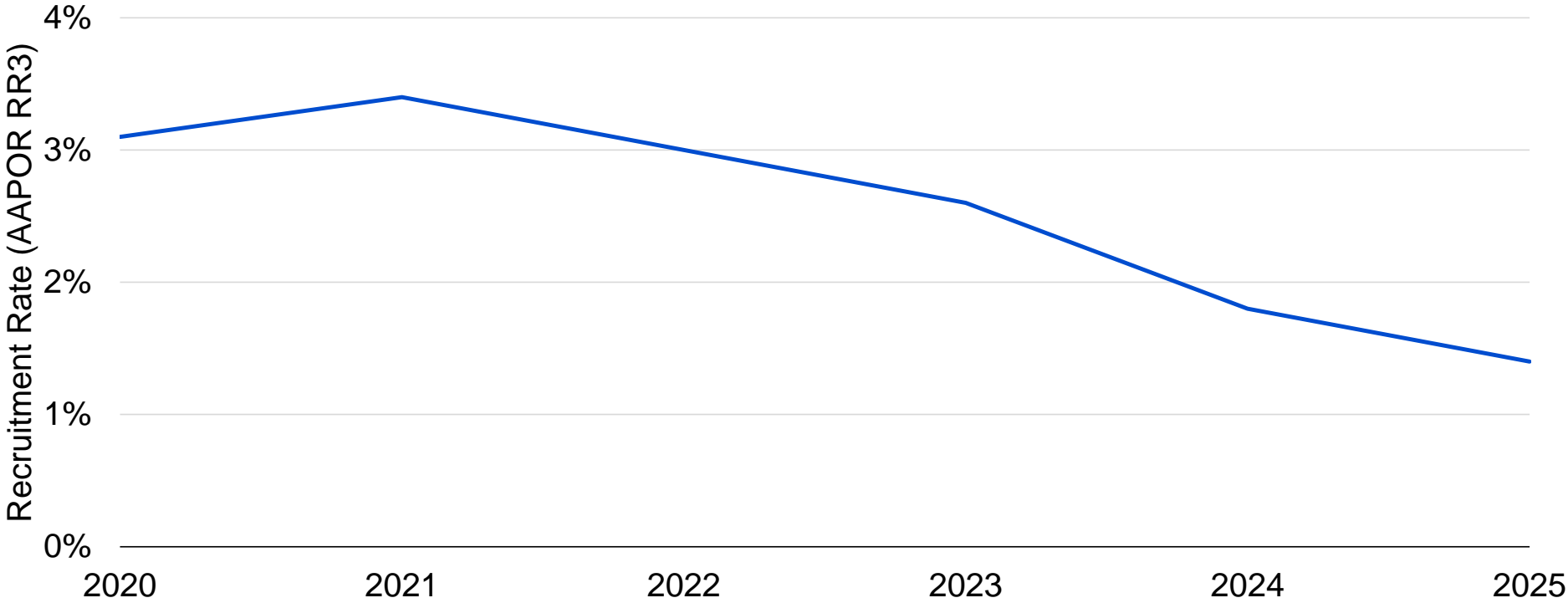
Nobody knows the troubles I've seen...CATI

Large-scale telephone survey response rates



Nobody knows the troubles I've seen...text-to-web

Life in Australia™ SMS push-to-web Recruitment Rates (Callegaro & DiSogra, 2008)



Nobody knows the troubles I've seen...ABS push-to-web

Sample yields (completes / addresses mailed)

Remoteness*	Survey A 2018	Survey B 2018	Survey C 2019	Survey D 2020	Survey D 2021	Survey E 2021	Survey C 2022	Survey F 2022	Survey F 2024	Survey C 2025
Major Cities	31.4%	27.8%	30.8%	12.2%	11.9%	28.9%	22.0%	12.4%	15.8%	24.8%
Inner Regional	30.5%	28.5%	34.7%	12.8%	12.9%	32.6%	20.8%	13.0%	16.0%	21.0%
Outer Regional	23.0%	21.4%	24.0%	9.6%	8.3%	21.1%	14.3%	9.1%	9.4%	17.7%
Remote	16.3%	15.3%	15.0%	4.9%	4.3%	12.8%	9.9%	5.1%	5.7%	10.4%
Very Remote	9.5%	13.2%	20.0%	1.5%	2.4%	4.5%	2.6%	1.3%	1.1%	7.7%

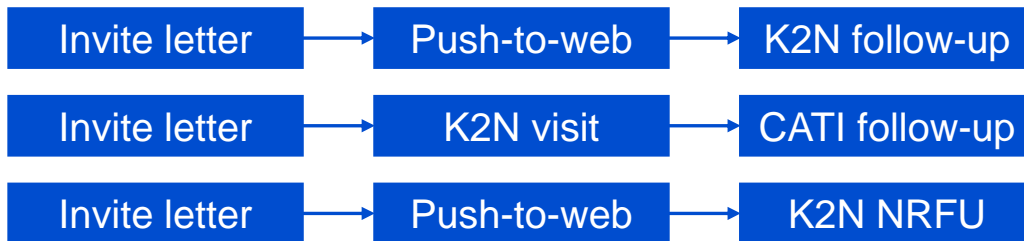


02

Knock-to-
nudge to the
rescue?

Knock-to-nudge

- COVID-19 era adaptation of existing address-based face-to-face (F2F) surveys in the U.K. in an attempt to offset the decline in response from switching to a push-to-web design
- Role of field team changes from F2F survey administration to “nudging” respondents to self-complete the survey via PAPI or CAWI and/or collect supplementary respondent info (e.g., phone numbers) for follow-up in other modes
- Typical contact sequences, as used in the U.K. (Domarchi et al., 2025)



Pilot field methods

October 23 – November 15, 2025

- Contact sequence:



- Initial contact via F2F field representative
- Leave-behind packet, either in person (where door answered) or in mailbox (when no contact made):
 - double-sided invitation brochure with QR code for survey link
 - randomised \$5 cash incentive condition (\$5 is lowest denomination Australian banknote) vs no unconditional incentive control condition
 - \$20 conditional e-gift card in all cases
 - contained in envelope, with clear window either to display QR code or \$5 note
- Up to two return visits on subsequent days/weeks, alternating with Thursday or Friday evenings, and weekend day-time slots, with appointments made as needed
- Respondent had to self-complete profile survey via CAWI; no CAPI option

Pilot invitation letter and SIMY cards



Have your say on issues impacting everyday Australians

Join now and receive a \$20 voucher for your first survey

Insert unique QR code

1. Scan the QR code or type the website address in your browser www.includewebsiteaddresswithuniqueinkhere
2. Answer a short set of questions and provide your contact details. This should only take a few minutes.
3. Check your email, including spam boxes, and find the email from Life in Australia™.
4. Complete the 10 minute 'About You' survey to earn a \$20 reward.

Please keep the \$5 enclosed as thanks for taking the time to read about Life in Australia.™

Take part in important surveys about national security, migration, drugs and alcohol, health, artificial intelligence, and more.

1 Life in Australia™ members are invited to take part in paid surveys.

- You will usually be invited to take part in 2 or 3 surveys a month - invitations are sent via email or SMS.
- You can complete online via mobile, tablet or desktop computer.
- Most surveys take about 20 minutes to complete but some are longer (and have a higher reward).
- Every survey is voluntary and you can opt out at any time.

2 Receive a reward for joining and each survey you complete.

- For a 15 to 20 minute survey, the reward is \$10. This amount is more for longer surveys.
- You can choose to save your rewards or use them straight away.
- Rewards can be redeemed for vouchers at a range of retailers or donated to charity.

3 Life in Australia™ is owned and run by The Social Research Centre.

- We were Australia's first dedicated social research organisation, established in 2000.
- Our research is used by governments, academics, non-for-profit organisations and others.
- We built Life in Australia to provide high-quality research that truly reflects the views of everyday Australians.
- We care about our members - that is why you are fairly rewarded for your time and we will share results with you.

4 Your privacy is fully protected under Australian law.

- We only use contact information for survey invitations, payment of rewards, and for other communications about Life in Australia™.
- Contact information is never supplied to clients or other organisations without your informed consent. It is not used for advertising, sales, or fundraising.
- All aspects of our research are undertaken in accordance with the Research Society Code of Professional Practice, ISO 20252:2019 standards, the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2021.


5 Life in Australia™ is entirely voluntary but we'd love you to take part!

- You choose whether to join the panel and whether you complete each survey.
- You are free to opt-out of the study at any time.
- We want you to take part because this helps make our surveys more accurate - it means the results truly reflect the opinions of all Australians.

Learn more about Life in Australia™ at LifeInAus.srcentre.com.au

If you have any questions, call us or email our team.
1800 023 040 (free call) | LifeInAus@srcentre.com.au





The Social Research Centre Pty Ltd
PO Box 13328
Law Courts VIC 8010

Sorry we missed you
A member of our team visited your address today.

on _____
at _____

Your household has been selected for the Life in Australia™ study.

Be paid to share your opinion! Enrol now and receive a \$20 e-voucher.

Please keep the \$5 enclosed as thanks for reading about Life in Australia™



Pilot sample

- Purposive sample selection in and near selected major cities, with a focus on harder-to-reach demographics:
 - Inner suburban, high SES
 - Regional, low SES
 - Suburban, low SES
 - Regional medium-high SES
- Multi-stage clustered sample:
 - PSU: Statistical Area Level 2 (3,000~25,000 people, average 10,000 people, a bit larger than a U.S. census tract), 1 per location
 - SSU: Statistical Area Level 1 (200~800 people, average 400 people), 2 per location
- Considerable back-and-forth with F2F field vendor over selection of areas: ruled out various areas as too remote, too dense, not dense enough (context: had provided a very low quote and needed to mind their budget)



03

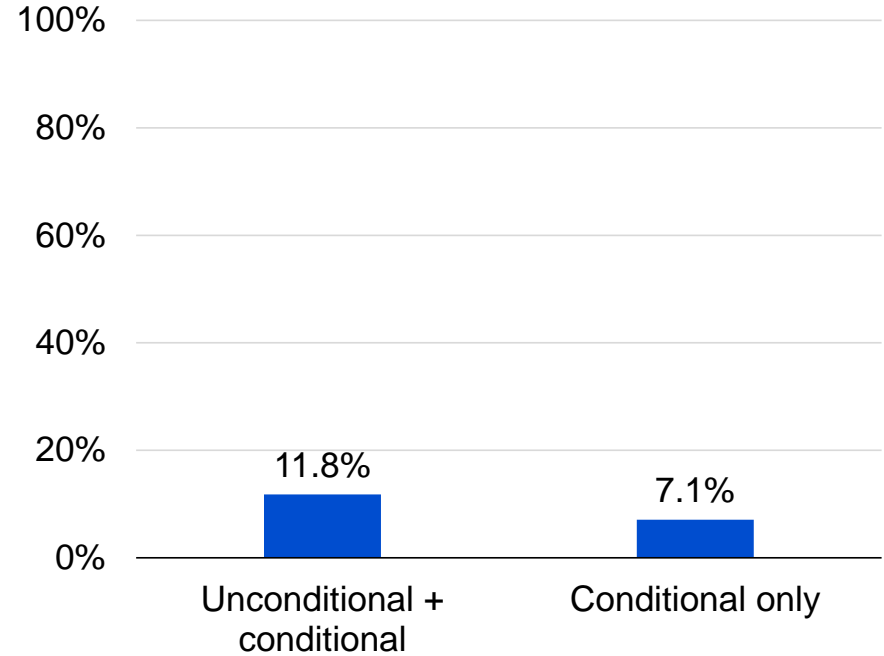
Knock-to-
nudge results

Final dispositions and outcome rates overall

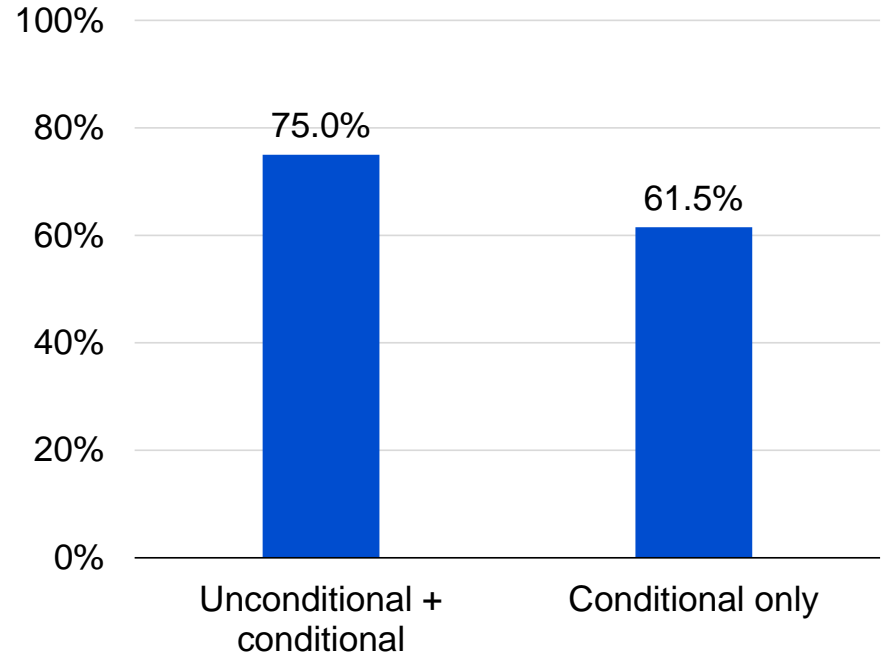
Final disposition / Outcome rate	<i>n</i>	%
1.11 F2F complete	26	4.7
1.12 Self-complete	11	2.0
2.112 Refusal (confirmed eligible)	85	15.3
2.113 Implicit refusal (confirmed eligible)	28	5.1
2.21 Missed appointment (eligible)	63	11.4
2.32 Mentally/physically unable/incompetent (eligible)	6	1.1
2.331 Language barrier (eligible)	3	0.5
2.9 Other non-contact (eligible)	5	0.9
3.17 Access barrier (unknown eligibility)	36	6.5
3.217 No answer (unknown eligibility)	194	35.0
4.313 No such address	45	8.1
4.51 Business address	33	6.0
4.61 Vacant address	18	3.2
4.9 Ineligible (other)	1	0.2
Total	554	100.0
AAPOR Response Rate 3		9.5

Performance by incentive experimental condition

AAPOR Response Rate 3

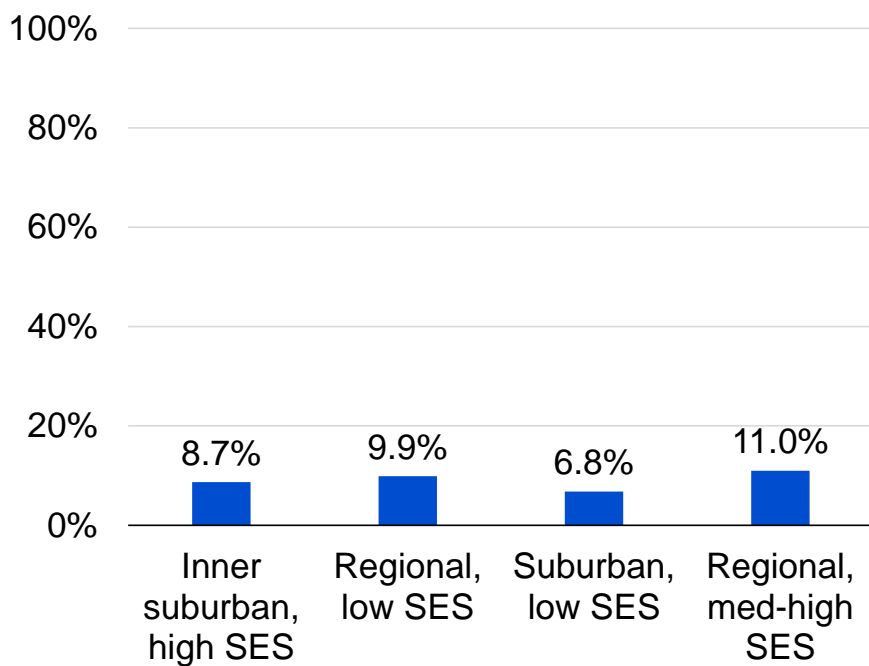


Percentage of completes with F2F contact

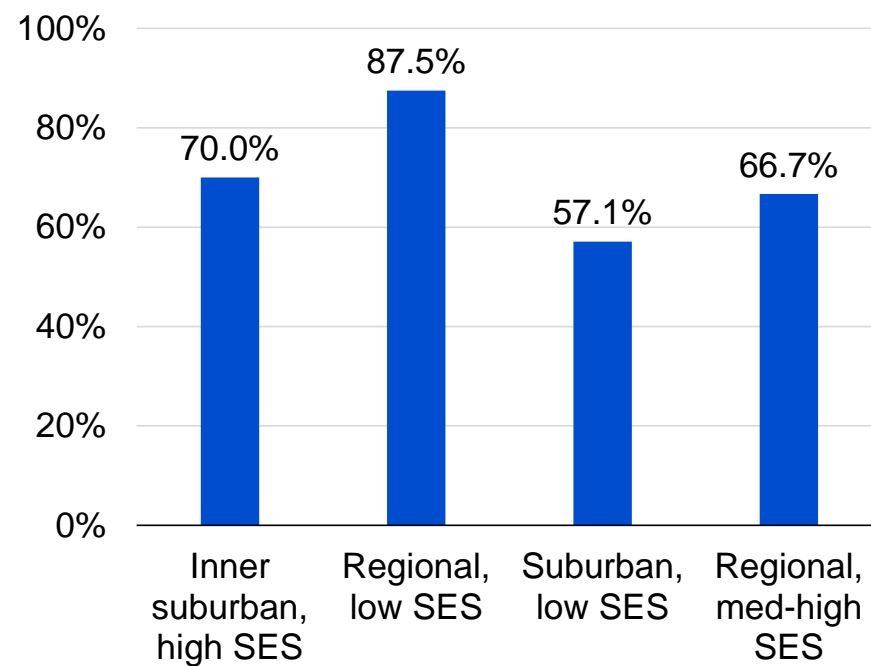


Performance by areas

AAPOR Response Rate 3

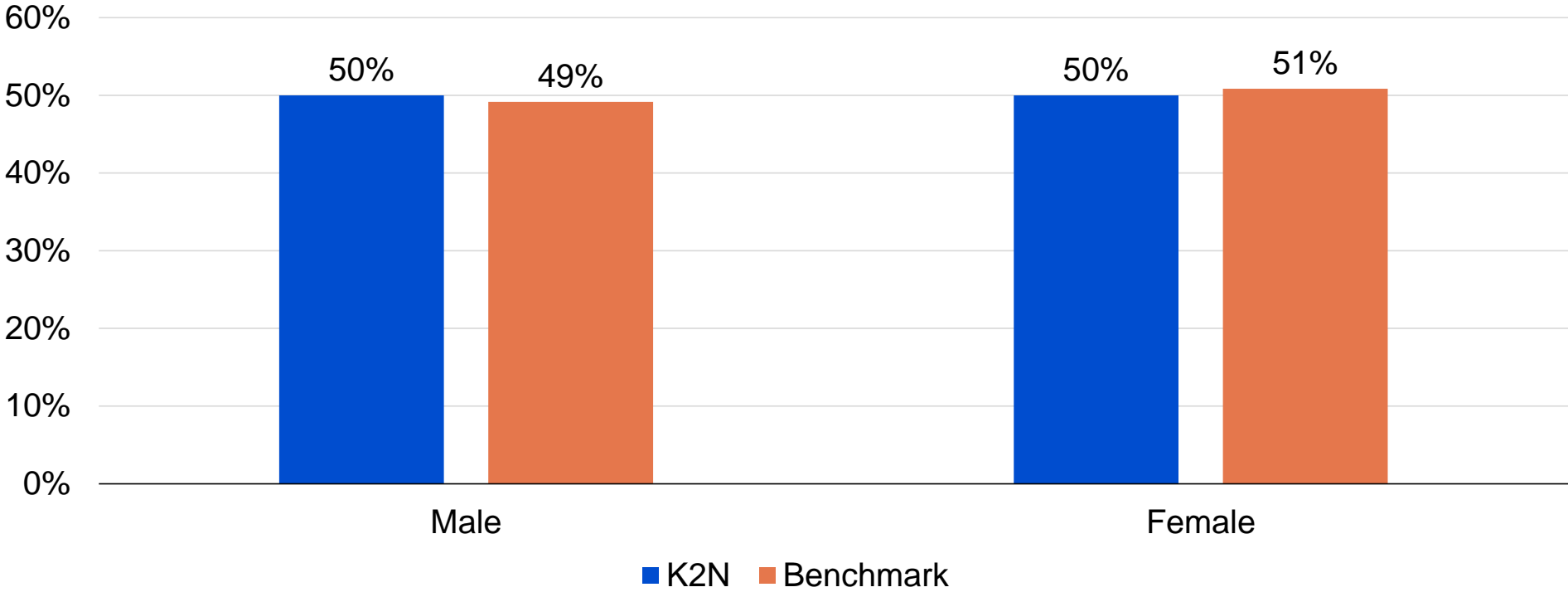


Percentage of completes with F2F contact



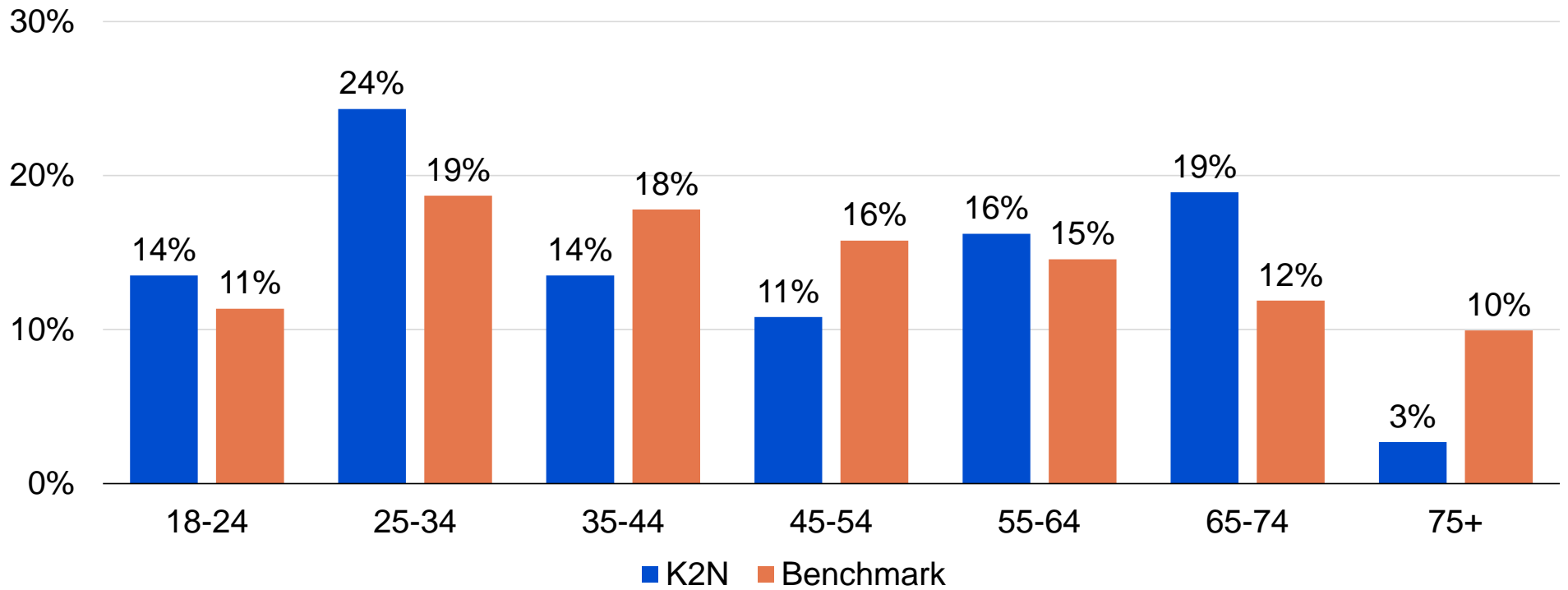
Gender

Sample distribution vs. benchmarks



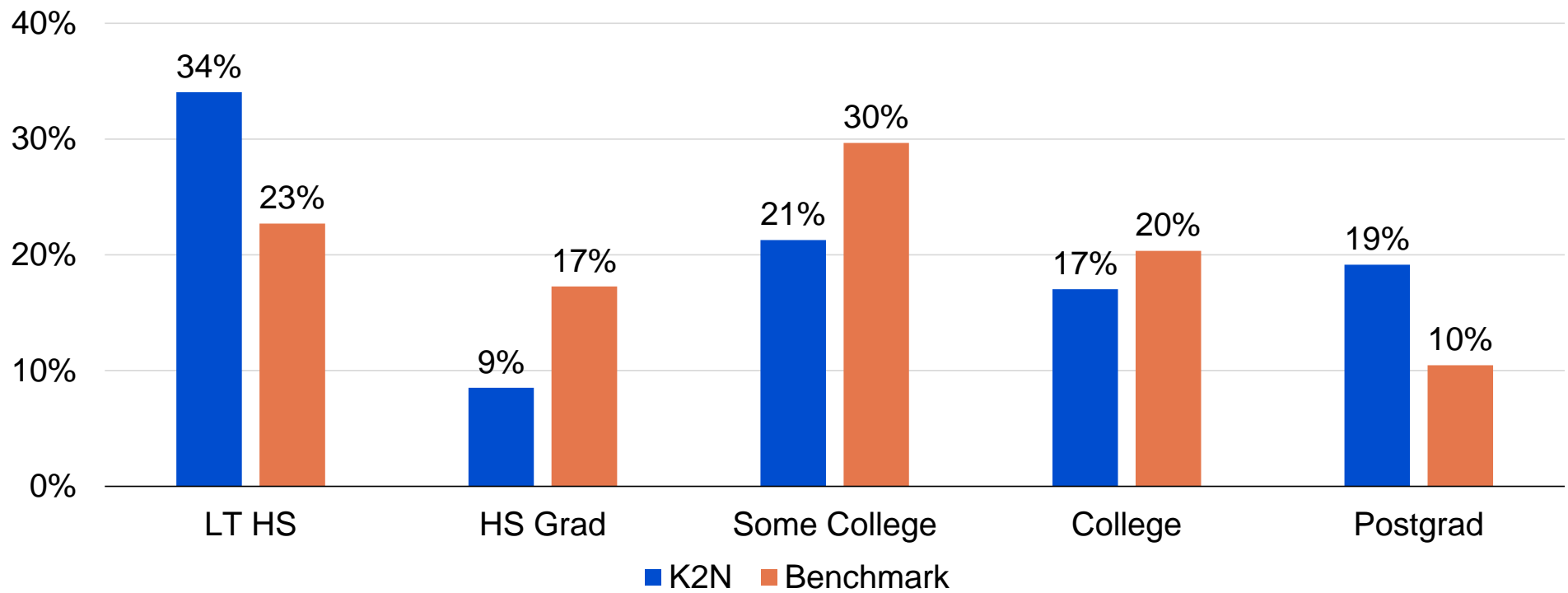
Age

Sample distribution vs. benchmarks



Educational attainment

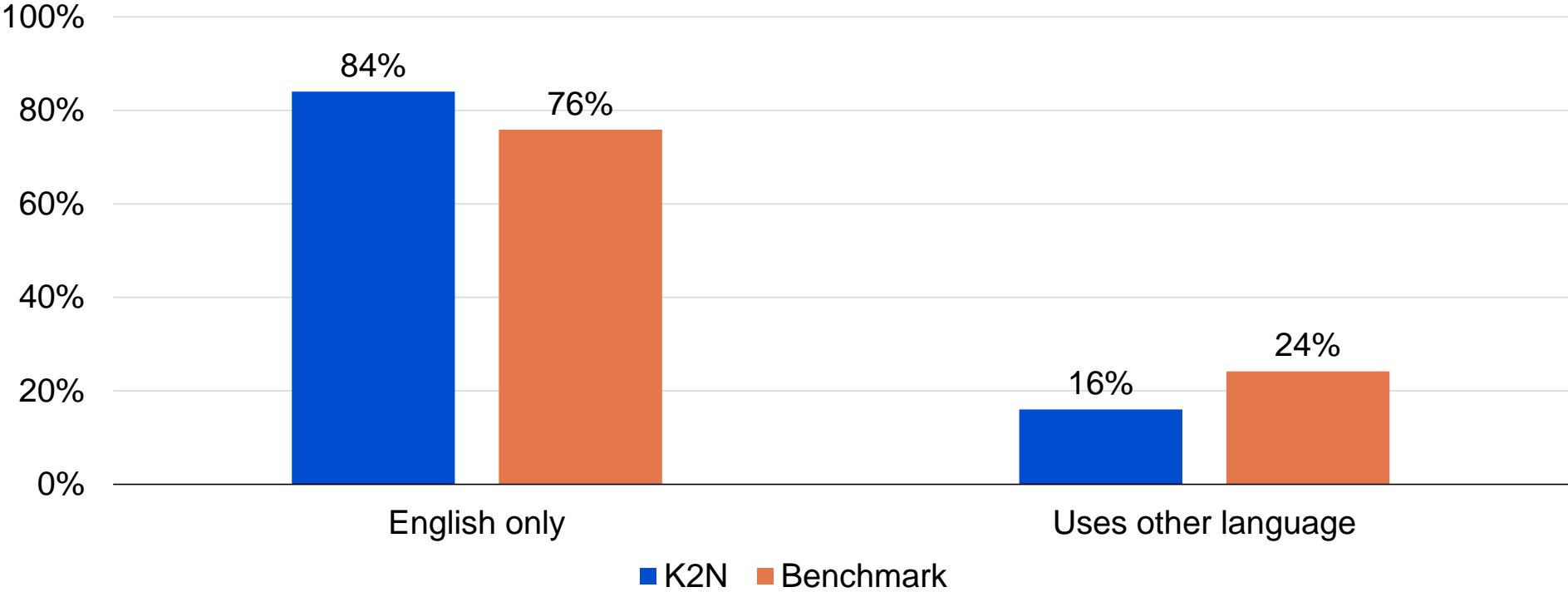
Sample distribution vs. benchmarks



Notes: LT HS = None through Year 11; HS Grad = Year 12; Some College = Certificate III/IV, Diploma, and Advanced Diploma; College = Bachelor's; Postgrad = Graduate Diploma through PhD

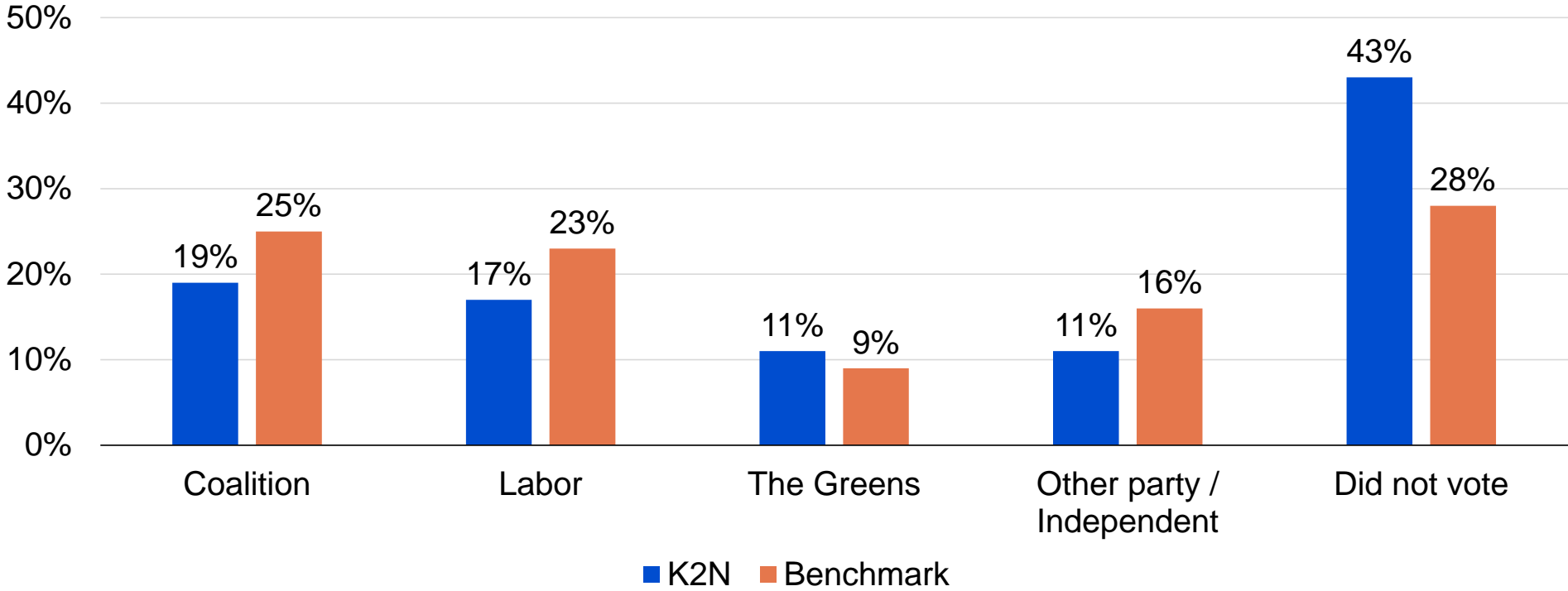
Use of a language other than English at home

Sample distribution vs. benchmarks



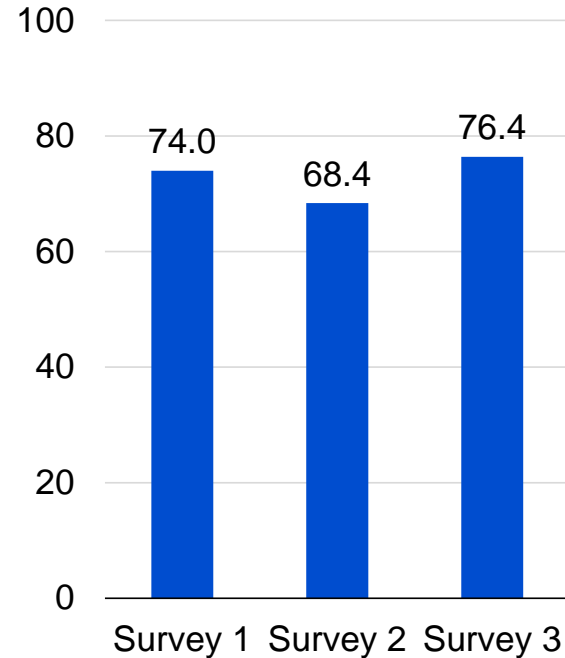
2025 vote

Sample distribution vs. benchmarks

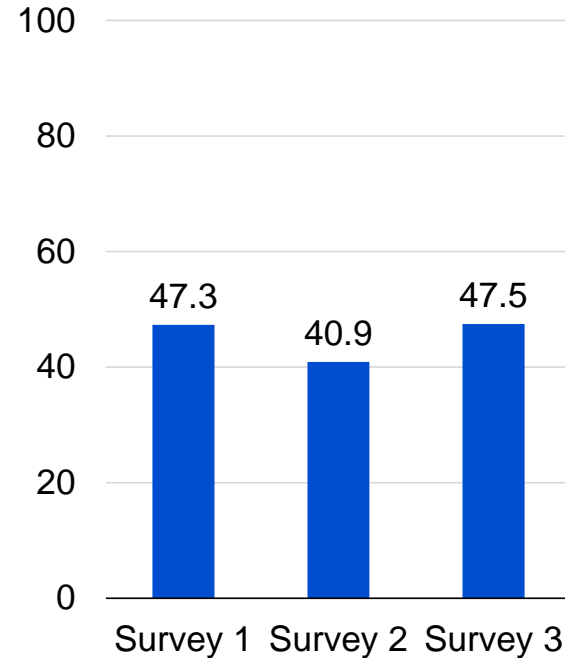


Completion rates of first three surveys after recruitment

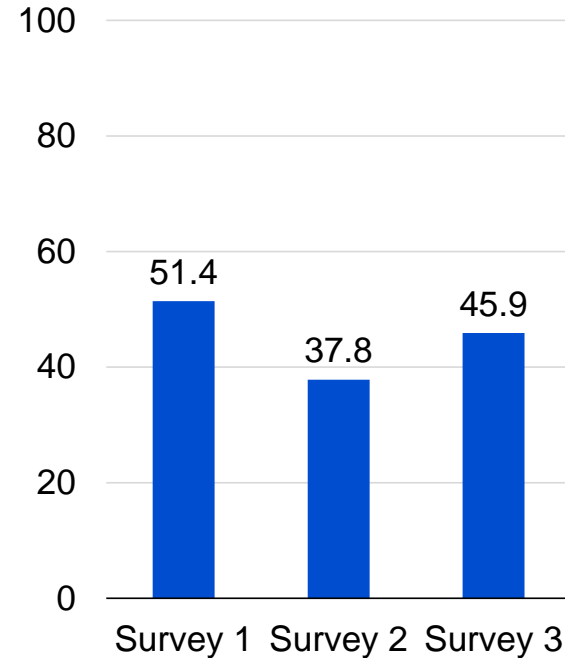
Address-based sampling (2021)



Text-to-web (2025)



Knock-to-nudge (2025)





04

Summary

The good

- Demographics fall close to benchmarks
- Relatively high recruitment rates (compared to text-to-web)
- Can use fine area-based targeting for indirect selection for political affiliation, race/ethnicity, SES, education, etc.



The bad



- Coverage restrictions to “Goldilocks” areas to keep (relatively) low costs:
 - Urban enough to minimise cluster costs
 - Not too dense to have apartment blocks with access barriers increasing hours per complete (HPC)
 - Not too sparse to have high HPC
- Even with these, expensive: predicted costs about 10 times higher per recruit than text-to-web
- First wave Completion Rate (Callegaro & DiSogra, 2008) in line with text-to-web (c. 50%), not ABS push-to-web (c. 65%), raising the amount of new panellists to recruit for a given number of survey completes

The ugly

If the venomous animals aren't scary enough



...but at least it's not a cassowary

*not actually a sampled residence



05

Next steps

Top-up recruitment 2026

- Cost and limited coverage ruled out K2N for now
- Pursuing a more complicated, multiple-frame and mode approach to control costs while maintaining coverage:
 - Frames:
 - Listed address sample
 - Deduplicated ABS sample
 - Modes:
 - List sample with phone number: mixed mode text-to-web + CATI
 - List sample with address only: push-to-web
 - ABS sample: push-to-web, with mailing type varying
- Continuing challenges in deliverability and respondent trust

Thank you

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References

- Callegaro, M., & DiSogra, C. (2008). Computing response metrics for online panels. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 72(5), 1008–1032. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfn065>
- Domarchi, C., Maslovskaya, O., & Smith, P. W. F. (2025, November). *Knock-to-nudge methods for recruitment in self-administered surveys: Evidence review* (Report 8, Survey Futures Survey Data Methods Collaboration). <https://surveyfutures.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/report-8-knock-to-nudge-evidence-review.pdf>



Appendices

Final dispositions and outcome rates overall

		<i>n</i>	%
1.11	F2F complete	26	4.7%
1.12	Self-complete	11	2.0%
2.112	Refusal (confirmed eligible)	85	15.3%
2.113	Implicit refusal (confirmed eligible)	28	5.1%
2.21	Missed appointment (eligible)	63	11.4%
2.32	Mentally/physically unable/incompetent (eligible)	6	1.1%
2.331	Language barrier (eligible)	3	0.5%
2.9	Other non-contact (eligible)	5	0.9%
3.17	Access barrier (unknown eligibility)	36	6.5%
3.217	No answer (unknown eligibility)	194	35.0%
4.313	No such address	45	8.1%
4.51	Business address	33	6.0%
4.61	Vacant address	18	3.2%
4.9	Ineligible (other)	1	0.2%
Total		554	100.0%
I	Completed interview	37	6.7%
R	Refusal	113	20.4%
NC	Non-contact	63	11.4%
O	Other	14	2.5%
UO	Unknown, other	230	41.5%
NE	Not eligible	97	17.5%
Total		554	100.0%
RR3	AAPOR Response Rate 3		9.5%

Summary dispositions and outcome rates by incentive type

		Unconditional incentive		Conditional incentive	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1.11	F2F complete	18	6.5%	8	2.9%
1.12	Self-complete	6	2.2%	5	1.8%
I	Completed interview	24	8.7%	13	4.7%
R	Refusal	63	22.7%	50	18.1%
NC	Non-contact	30	10.8%	33	11.9%
O	Other	9	3.2%	5	1.8%
UO	Unknown, other	106	38.3%	124	44.8%
NE	Not eligible	45	16.2%	52	18.8%
Total		277	100.0%	277	100.0%
RR3	AAPOR Response Rate 3		11.8%		7.1%
	Face-to-face completion %		75.0%		61.5%

Summary dispositions and outcome rates by SA2

	Inner suburban, high SES		Regional, low SES		Suburban, low SES		Regional, med-high SES	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
I Completed interview	10	7.5%	8	4.4%	7	5.8%	12	10.0%
R Refusal	23	17.2%	20	11.1%	28	23.3%	42	35.0%
NC Non-contact	26	19.4%	28	15.6%	6	5.0%	3	2.5%
O Other	0	0.0%	4	2.2%	5	4.2%	5	4.2%
UO Unknown, other	65	48.5%	47	26.1%	66	55.0%	52	43.3%
NE Not eligible	10	7.5%	73	40.6%	8	6.7%	6	5.0%
Total	134	100.0%	180	100.0%	120	100.0%	120	100.0%
RR3 AAPOR Response Rate 3		8.7%		9.9%		6.8%		11.0%
F2F completion %		70.0%		87.5%		57.1%		66.7%