



SENSE OF BELONGING AND MEDIA REPRESENTATION

AMONG MULTILINGUAL AUDIENCES
IN AUSTRALIA



UNIVERSITY OF
CANBERRA

NEWS AND MEDIA
RESEARCH CENTRE



SBS

Printed in Australia

Report design: Ava Wang

Copyeditor: Erin O'Dwyer

Photographer: Ashley Mar

Cover photo: Jasmeet Kaur, a second-generation Australian-Punjabi, believes SBS has played a great role assisting her to tread between two cultures and find her sense of belonging within the Australian community. She now works as a digital content producer for SBS Punjabi.

ISBN: 978-1-74088-618-5 (Electronic)

978-1-74088-617-8 (Print)

DOI: 10.60836/91tb-6829

Cite as:

Griffiths, R., Park, S., Donoghue, A., Lee, J., Nguyen, T. Fujita, M., Zao, H. & Lukamto, W. (2025). *Sense of Belonging and Media Representation among Multilingual Audiences in Australia*. SBS & N&MRC, University of Canberra. <https://doi.org/10.60836/91tb-6829>

Copyright notice:

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License



Sense of belonging and media representation among multilingual audiences in Australia

Rebecca Griffiths

Sora Park

Alexander Donoghue

Jee Young Lee

Thu Nguyen

Momoko Fujita

Hugh Zhao

Wiliam Lukamto

Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

News & Media Research Centre, University of Canberra

CONTENTS

6	Foreword
7	About the Authors
9	Executive Summary
10	Key Findings
13	Methodology
16	Sense of Belonging
16	Overview
18	Findings
18	Sense of belonging among multilingual audiences
18	Sense of belonging and the nuances among multilingual communities
20	Sense of belonging and time spent living in Australia
21	Sense of belonging and confidence in English
22	Sense of belonging and type of residency
23	Sense of belonging by age
24	Sense of belonging and collective efficacy
24	Sense of belonging and civic participation
25	Sense of belonging and news representation
25	Sense of belonging and news access
26	Summary
28	Participation: Collective Efficacy and Civic Participation
28	Overview
30	Findings
30	Collective efficacy
32	Collective efficacy and time spent living in Australia and confidence in English
33	Collective efficacy and type of residency
33	Collective efficacy by age
34	Collective efficacy and media representation
35	Civic participation
37	Civic participation and type of residency
38	Civic participation by age
38	Civic participation and collective efficacy
39	Civic participation and media representation
40	Civic participation and news access
41	Summary
42	Representation in Australian Media
42	Overview
44	Findings
44	Representation in Australian media
45	Representation in Australian media and the nuances among multilingual audiences
45	Representation in Australian media and time spent living in Australia
46	Representation in Australian media and confidence in English
46	Representation in Australian media by age
47	Summary

48 News Representation

- 48 Overview
- 50 Findings
- 50 Representation in Australian news in general
- 50 Representation in Australian news in general and the nuances among multilingual audiences
- 51 Representation in Australian news in general and time spent living in Australia
- 52 Representation in Australian news in general and confidence in English
- 52 Representation in Australian news in general by age
- 53 News representation and news consumption
- 55 Representation in SBS News
- 56 Representation in SBS News and the nuances among multilingual audiences
- 57 Representation in SBS News and length of time living in Australia
- 57 Representation in SBS News and confidence in English
- 58 Representation in SBS News by age
- 59 Summary

60 Content Needs and Cultural Representation in Australian Media

- 60 Overview
- 62 Findings
- 62 Content needs and cultural representation, and the nuances among multilingual audiences
- 63 Content needs and cultural representation, and time spent living in Australia
- 64 Content needs and cultural representation, and confidence in English
- 65 Content needs and cultural representation, and type of residency
- 66 Summary

68 News Consumption

- 68 Overview
- 70 Findings
- 70 News consumption among multilingual audiences
- 70 News consumption by age
- 71 News consumption in language
- 71 News consumption in language among multilingual audiences
- 72 News consumption and time spent living in Australia
- 72 News consumption and confidence in English
- 73 News consumption in language by age
- 74 Summary

76 Platform Preference

- 76 Overview
- 78 Findings
- 78 Platform preference for news in English
- 78 Platform preference for news in English among multilingual audiences
- 79 Preferred news platform in English and time spent living in Australia
- 80 Preferred news platform in English and confidence in English
- 80 Platform preference for news in English and type of residency
- 81 Platform preference for news in English by age
- 81 Preferred news platform in English and news consumption
- 82 Preferred in-language news platforms
- 82 Preferred in-language news platform and the nuances among multilingual community
- 83 Preferred in-language news platform and time spent living in Australia
- 84 Preferred in-language platform and confidence in English
- 84 Preferred in-language news platform by age
- 85 Preferred news platform for language news and news consumption
- 86 Summary

FOREWORD



Jane Palfreyman
Acting Managing Director, SBS

With over half of Australians born overseas or having a parent who was, multiculturalism defines us as a nation. Public debates on migration, identity and belonging highlight both the richness of our multicultural society and the challenges in fully realising an inclusive Australia.

This second wave of SBS's Sense of Belonging research, conducted with the University of Canberra's News & Media Research Centre, provides timely insight into how and why diverse communities feel they belong in this country, the role Australian citizenship plays, and the benefits of belonging. The findings are clear: people with a strong sense of belonging are more likely to participate, contribute and thrive in society, but not all experience power and representation equally.

More than one in four Australians speak a language other than English at home. This research covers Arabic, Cantonese, Italian, Mandarin, Punjabi and Vietnamese-speaking communities, representing both long-established and fast-growing language groups in Australia. Punjabi is new to this edition, reflecting its rapid growth in today's multicultural landscape. The findings offer deeper insight into the varied ways in which diverse communities experience, and at times struggle with, inclusion and belonging.

Encouragingly, the research shows SBS plays a unique role in contemporary Australia, connecting, informing and empowering communities across more than 60 languages. SBS has known for a long time that language matters. Audiences want to hear Australian news and stories in their own language, even when

they're confident English speakers. It's about trust, relevance and feeling like what's being said truly reflects who they are. In-language content makes people feel included and represented, which in turn builds belonging.

SBS is proud of its initiatives like Australia Explained, which supports new migrants with multilingual information to better navigate life in Australia, and recently making the Australian National Anthem accessible in over 60 languages. We continue to innovate, from in-language digital news services to cultural content that challenges stereotypes — ensuring that all Australians can see themselves represented.

Belonging is not only about feeling at home; it is about being heard, respected and empowered to contribute. This research helps us understand how to build a stronger, more inclusive society where every community feels part of the national story.

I invite you to explore these findings, reflect on their implications, and join us in building a more inclusive Australia where everyone can feel they truly belong.

Jane Palfreyman
Acting Managing Director, SBS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This research is a collaboration between the News and Media Research Centre (N&MRC) at the University of Canberra, and SBS, the Australian public broadcaster with a special remit to serve multilingual, multicultural and First Nations audiences. The research team brings together a wealth of experience across different disciplines and research methods, multilingual and communications research expertise, and lived experiences within multilingual communities.



Rebecca Griffiths
SBS

Rebecca Griffiths is the Audience Research Lead at SBS, helping internal and external stakeholders understand audiences and the drivers behind their behaviours. With more than 20 years' experience in market research, Rebecca's focus at SBS is on multicultural research. She leads quantitative and qualitative research, driving strategic business decisions and telling compelling stories.



Sora Park
News & Media Research Centre

Dr Sora Park is a Professor of Communication, and Director of the News & Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. Her research focuses on digital media users, media markets and media policy. She leads the *Digital News Report: Australia* and the Australian Research Council Linkage Project 'Heartbeat of Australia: Tracking, Understanding and Engaging News Audiences'.



Alexander Donoghue
SBS

Alexander Donoghue is an Audience Research Manager at SBS, leading nationally representative research projects that help SBS understand how Australians engage with media, brands, and content. Bringing experience across audience research, creative writing and literary analysis, since joining SBS in 2022, Alexander has focused on in-depth studies of audience behaviours and cultural trends.



Jee Young Lee
News & Media Research Centre

Dr Jee Young Lee is a senior lecturer at the News & Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. Her research expertise lies in media audience analysis, with a particular focus on news consumption, digital participation, media literacy and digital citizenship. She is a co-investigator on the Australian Research Council Linkage Project 'Heartbeat of Australia: Tracking, Understanding and Engaging News Audiences' and a co-author of the *Digital News Report: Australia*.



Thu Nguyen
SBS

Thu Nguyen is the Multilingual Research Manager, with SBS's Audience Data & Insights team. Born in Vietnam, Thu has called Australia home for 15 years. She has almost 20 years' experience dedicated to market research and data analytics. She joined SBS in 2022 in a role focused on connecting the business with culturally and linguistically diverse audiences in Australia through research and insights.



Momoko Fujita
News & Media Research Centre

Dr Momoko Fujita is a Senior Lecturer in Communications and Media and a member of the News & Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. Her research focuses on the positive and negative impacts of emerging digital media and information communication technology on audience behaviour and wellbeing. She is a co-author of the *Digital News Report: Australia*.



Hugh Zhao
SBS

Hugh Zhao is an expert data analyst with over five years of experience in market research. Born in Australia to Cantonese-speaking migrant parents, he joined SBS in 2024. He is dedicated to leveraging complex data to generate meaningful insights into audience behaviour.



William Lukamto
News & Media Research Centre

William Lukamto is a quantitative researcher at the News & Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. He analyses large-scale surveys on trust in news and citizenship, using Python, SPSS and Power BI to translate data into insights. A PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne, he studies censorship and self-censorship in soft-authoritarian contexts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Belonging is a settled feeling that gives us confidence in the world around us. Important elements of belonging include feeling at home, needs being met, shared emotional connections, and having an influence over the community and the wider Australian society. Investigating how that is manifested in Australian society is the aim of this report.

This study is a second iteration (*Wave 2*) of *Sense of Belonging Among Multilingual Audiences in Australia* (*Wave 1*), published in 2023. The core purpose is to understand the role of news media and media representation more generally in fostering social participation and a sense of belonging among multilingual communities. Media is defined broadly and means all platforms and channels that are available and can be consumed in Australia. News media is defined as the information gathered, verified, and shared by journalists, media organisations and other platforms about current events and issues.

The study adopted a multimodal and multilingual methodology, and was conducted in seven languages: Arabic, Cantonese, Italian, Mandarin, Punjabi, Vietnamese, and English. We expanded the research to include Punjabi speakers, a high growth language community in the ABS Census 2021. Respondents from these language communities could respond in the language of their choice. In *Wave 2*, we also compared key indicators with the general population.

Among different aspects that make people feel they belong, multilingual audiences are more likely to feel at home in Australia but have less confidence about making an impact on society. We found that the general population is experiencing a lower sense of belonging compared to the multilingual communities we studied in this report. We also found an increase in sense of belonging among the five multilingual communities since *Wave 1*.

In *Wave 2*, the research uncovers other drivers to belonging, including age and residency status, in addition to English language confidence and length of stay in Australia which were revealed as important factors in *Wave 1*. Multilingual audiences who have Australian citizenship feel at home in Australia and are more likely to experience a sense of membership within their community compared to permanent or temporary residents. Older Australians are also more likely to feel at home. We found nuanced differences between the six language communities, where Punjabi speakers have the highest sense of belonging and Mandarin speakers the lowest.

Time spent living in Australia, having collective efficacy and feelings of adequate representation in the media and news are all positively associated with people's sense of belonging. We found that collective efficacy encourages civic participation, which empowers people to have influence over the community and society.

Media representation plays a key role in audiences' confidence to participate in society, which can lead to a greater sense of belonging. However, multilingual audiences feel there is a lack of representation of their communities in the media, particularly among Arabic, Mandarin and Cantonese speakers. Younger multilingual respondents also feel less represented in both news and general Australian media compared to older audiences. Recent migrants feel less represented.

While multilingual audiences feel less represented in Australian news in general when compared to the general population, the trend is reversed when it comes to SBS News. Multilingual audiences feel more represented by SBS News compared to the general population.

Multilingual audiences have the desire to see more content in their language and content that accurately represents their cultural or language community. They also want to see more content about their cultural or language community living in Australia. Those born in Australia had a strong desire for their community not being generalised or stereotyped in the media.

When seeking news in both English and in language, multilingual audiences rank social media the top source. Recent migrants and temporary residents particularly prefer social media, whereas those who have spent more than 10 years in Australia are more likely to turn to TV news. However, TV news was much less preferred in language compared to news in English, which may be because of the lack of provision. As with general news consumption, younger audiences are much more likely to prefer social media and YouTube, whereas older generations prefer TV as a source of news in language. We also found that there is a strong need for media content generally to be available in language across all communities regardless of their confidence in English.

KEY FINDINGS

- **There is a perceived weak influence over Australian society, despite strong feelings of community membership and having needs met:** Respondents felt at home and that they have their needs met within the broader Australian society but perceived significantly less influence over it.
- **There is variation in the sense of belonging across the six language groups:** Punjabi speakers report the highest sense of belonging across all community types, while Mandarin speakers feel the least connected, while the general population feels the least influence.
- **There are differences in the sense of belonging by residential status:** The vast majority of Australian citizens feel at home in Australia, while just over half of temporary residents do so.
- **A stronger sense of belonging is linked to longer time spent in Australia:** Those born in Australia or who have lived for 10 or more years feel most at home and that they have influence in society, while newer arrivals report lower connection and influence.
- **English confidence alone does not guarantee a sense of belonging:** Confidence in English generally boosts feelings of belonging in Australia, but those with the highest language confidence report the lowest perceptions that society members care for each other and that they have an influence.
- **Collective efficacy fosters a sense of belonging:** Those who believe their cultural/language community can impact Australian society report significantly stronger feelings of societal care and influence.
- **Inclusive news representation fosters a sense of belonging:** Those who feel their cultural/language community is fairly and adequately represented in the news are nearly twice as likely to think they have influence over Australian society.
- **Collective efficacy is higher than perception of individual influence over society:** More than two-thirds (69%) of respondents agreed that their cultural or language community has a significant impact on Australian society.
- **Collective efficacy varies by language community:** Punjabi speakers reported the highest levels of collective efficacy (78%), while Cantonese speakers reported the lowest (64%).
- **Language confidence and length of stay shape collective efficacy:** Respondents with lower English confidence (62%) and those who had lived in Australia for less than five years (67%) were the least likely to say their community can impact Australian society.
- **Younger multilingual audiences are more civically engaged:** Two in five respondents aged 18–34 (40%) reported working with others to address local, national, or global issues compared to 35% of those aged 35–54 and only 16% of those aged 55+.
- **Those who feel represented in the news have higher collective efficacy:** Respondents who felt fairly and sufficiently represented in the news were significantly more likely to report higher levels of collective efficacy.
- **Civic participation among multilingual audiences is widespread but uneven:** Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents had engaged in at least one civic participation activity. Mandarin and Punjabi speakers reported the highest participation rates (70%), while Cantonese speakers reported the lowest (49%).
- **Collective efficacy is related to civic participation:** Those with stronger views, either positive or negative, about their community's collective efficacy are more likely to engage in civic participation activities.
- **English confidence encourages civic participation:** Those with perfect English confidence are significantly more likely to participate in civic activities than those with low or moderate confidence (69% vs 49%).
- **Multilingual audiences feel less represented by general news compared to the broader Australian population:** The general population is more likely to agree that they are covered fairly (58% vs 46%) and sufficiently (53% vs 41%).

- **Multilingual audiences feel more represented by SBS News than they do by general Australian news:** For fairness of coverage of cultural or language community, multilingual audiences report a much higher level of agreement when considering SBS News (56%) when compared to general Australian news (46%).
- **Younger multilingual audiences feel less represented in media overall:** Multilingual audiences aged 18–34 have the lowest rate of agreement that general media in Australia fairly represent their cultural or language community (41% vs 49% for 55 years and over).
- **Multilingual audiences want more media content in their own language:** Content needs in language is high across all language communities despite different levels of confidence in English.
- **There was an increase in a sense of belonging among multilingual communities:** Among the five language communities studied in Wave 1 and Wave 2, there was an improvement in sense of belonging.

Families enjoying Lunar New Year celebrations in Hurstville, Sydney.



"[I feel like I belong in Australia because] I found the job, bought a house, received support from government and being able to help others in the communities." (Mandarin speaker)

METHODOLOGY

Our research draws on a multimodal survey method to achieve a balanced and inclusive sample that closely matches the community profile of the 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census.

Fieldwork was conducted between December 2024 and January 2025 by a reputable and independent research agency with 20 or more years' experience in multilingual research.

The survey was offered in seven languages — Arabic, Cantonese, Italian, Mandarin, Punjabi, Vietnamese, and English. Respondents had a choice of their preferred language for responses. In addition, respondents could switch between English and six other languages offered during the survey.

The final sample consists of n=1,876 respondents. Quotas were set at around n=200 per language. The study achieved its multilingual quotas, yielding a combined n=1,432 respondents across the six target language communities: Arabic (n=204), Cantonese (n=222), Italian (n=205), Mandarin (n=329), Punjabi (n=281), and Vietnamese (n=191). The 'general population' sample for comparison was also included (n=444).

For the multilingual respondents (n=1,432), the data collection involved a strategic use of online (n=1,412, 75%), face-to-face (n=380, 27%) and phone (n=84, 6%) surveys in order to capture audiences who may not respond to an online survey. The general population sample was recruited entirely online via an online research panel (n=444).

These six multilingual groups were selected because they are some of the most widely spoken languages other than English in Australian homes, as reported in the 2021 Census. The sample

includes a mix of migration recency. Italian migrants are the most established community. The Punjabi community is a more recent migrant group, and also high growth — increasing by 80% since the last census.

This study is the second wave of *Sense of Belonging among Multilingual Audiences in Australia* (2023), which was conducted in November 2021 to January 2022. We refer to this as Wave 1 and the current study as Wave 2.

When comparing with Wave 1 data, we applied weights. When comparing Wave 1 and Wave 2, we only included the five language communities that were comparable.

The weighting evens each stratum (general population plus six language groups) to an effective n=200, yielding a balanced base of n=1,400. We then rake those strata to 2021 Census gender-by-age targets. Extreme weights are then trimmed (2nd–98th percentiles) and rescaled, so figures rest on equal language footing while matching Australia's current age-gender profile. Thus, the sample demographic profile closely reflects the 2021 Census data. The final sample by language group is summarised in Table 1.

In the survey, we asked an open-ended question 'Please describe in your own words what makes you feel, or would make you feel, like you belong in Australia? There is no right nor wrong answer here. We are simply interested in your personal opinion.' We have added relevant quotes from this response throughout the report.

TABLE 1 | Summary of respondents (weighted)

Category		General Population	Arabic	Cantonese	Italian	Mandarin	Punjabi	Vietnamese
Total		200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Gender	Male	98 (49.0%)	100 (50.9%)	92 (45.9%)	93 (46.7%)	89 (44.6%)	109 (54.5%)	79 (41.9%)
	Female	102 (51.0%)	96 (49.1%)	108 (54.1%)	107 (53.3%)	111 (55.4%)	91 (45.5%)	110 (58.1%)
Age group	U35	56 (28.0%)	73 (36.3%)	54 (27.2%)	23 (11.4%)	88 (43.9%)	107 (53.3%)	75 (37.3%)
	35+	144 (72.0%)	127 (63.7%)	146 (72.8%)	177 (88.6%)	112 (56.1%)	93 (46.7%)	125 (62.7%)
Time in Australia	Less than 5 years	3 (1.3%)	26 (12.9%)	27 (13.5%)	6 (2.9%)	48 (24.2%)	62 (31.0%)	23 (11.5%)
	5–10 years	7 (3.7%)	38 (19.0%)	21 (10.5%)	8 (4.2%)	55 (27.6%)	72 (35.9%)	30 (14.8%)
	More than 10 years	40 (20.2%)	82 (41.2%)	124 (61.9%)	92 (46.1%)	87 (43.6%)	58 (28.8%)	101 (50.6%)
	Born in Australia	150 (74.9%)	54 (26.9%)	28 (14.1%)	94 (46.8%)	9 (4.6%)	9 (4.3%)	46 (23.1%)
Confidence in English	Low/Moderate	3 (8.2%)	34 (17.1%)	65 (32.4%)	13 (6.3%)	54 (26.9%)	28 (14.2%)	68 (34.0%)
	High	11 (28.4%)	53 (26.3%)	63 (31.7%)	36 (18.2%)	88 (43.9%)	83 (41.3%)	47 (23.6%)
	Perfect	24 (63.3%)	113 (56.5%)	72 (36.0%)	151 (75.5%)	58 (29.2%)	89 (44.5%)	85 (42.4%)

TABLE 2 | Concepts and measurements

Concept	Definition	Measurement
Sense of belonging	<p>Sense of belonging is an important dimension of social cohesion. In this study we focused on the concept of belonging.</p> <p>We adapted the Sense of Community Index for multilingual audiences.</p> <p>The theory identifies four elements of a sense of community: membership, influence, meeting needs, and a shared emotional connection.</p> <p>We asked questions reflecting these four elements in the context of the three community types: local, cultural/ language community, and Australian society.</p>	<p>How well does each of the following statements represent how you feel about [your local community/your cultural or language community/ Australian society]? (5-point scale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My needs are met because I am part of [my local community/ my cultural or language community/ Australian society]. • I feel ‘at home’ in [my local community/my cultural or language community/ Australian society]. • I have influence over what [my local community/my cultural or language community/ Australian society] is like. • Members of [my local community/my cultural or language community/ Australian society] care about each other.
Participation	<p>Participation is defined as a meaningful engagement in connective activities with other people, community, and society.</p> <p>We included two indicators that reflect social participation: collective efficacy¹ and civic participation.²</p> <p>The first set of questions asked about the collective efficacy of respondents’ cultural/language community as a group.</p> <p>The second set of questions asked about civic participation activities, including discussing issues with others, contacting political representatives or organisations, signing petitions, joining advocacy groups, or collaborating with others to address societal issues across both in person and online.</p>	<p>Collective efficacy</p> <p>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (5-point scale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My cultural or language community can have a significant impact on Australia. • Australian society cares about what my cultural or language community wants. • People in Australia are interested in my cultural or language community. <p>Civic participation</p> <p>Have you engaged in the following activities either online or offline over the past 12 months? [online/offline/did not engage]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with others to solve local, national, or global issues. • Contacted, or attempted to contact, a politician or organisation to express my views on political or social issues. • Shared my thoughts related to political or social issues with others. • Signed petitions about social, cultural, political, or economic issues. • Belonged to or joined a group that is involved in social issues or working to advance a cause.

¹Kim, E. & Kim Y. -C (2021). Communication Infrastructure, Migrant Community Engagement, and Integrative Adaptation of Korean Chinese Migrants in Seoul. *Communication Research* 48(5): 717–739.

²Choi, M., Glassman, M., & Cristol, D. (2017). What it means to be a citizen in the internet age: Development of a reliable and valid digital citizenship scale. *Computers & education*, 107, 100–112.

Concept	Definition	Measurement
Representation	<p>News representation is defined as how audiences feel about news coverage related to respondents' cultural or language backgrounds.</p> <p>We examined three aspects of both media and news representation: the volume, fairness of coverage, and media talents or reporter/journalists representing people from respondents' cultural/language community.</p> <p>We asked this question for Australian media, news in general, and SBS News in particular to examine the role of a multilingual-focused broadcaster and how it relates to representation of culture/language in news.</p>	<p>Thinking about Australian media overall, how well do you think it represents your cultural or language community? (5-point scale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My cultural or language community is covered fairly. • There is enough coverage of my cultural or language community. • Media talents represent people from my cultural or language community. <p>And thinking about Australian news in general, how well do you think it covers your cultural or language community? (5-point scale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My cultural or language community is covered fairly. • There is enough coverage of my cultural or language community. • The reporters/journalists in news represent people from my cultural or language community. <p>Thinking about SBS News specifically, how do you think it covers your cultural or language community? (5-point scale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My cultural or language community is covered fairly. • There is enough coverage of my cultural or language community. • The reporters/journalists in SBS News represent people from my cultural or language community.
News access	<p>News consumption is often related to social participation and perceptions of news representation. We measured the frequency of general news consumption.</p>	<p>Typically, how often do you access news? By news we mean national, international, regional/local news, and other topical events accessed via any platform (e.g. radio, TV, newspaper, online, or social media platforms, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy: More than once a day • Light: Once a day to less often than once a week • Non-users: Less often than once a month or never.
Multilingual audiences	<p>In this study, we defined multilingual audiences as those who speak a language other than English. While this overlaps with ethnicity, country of origin, and cultural background, it is a broader and more inclusive concept.</p>	<p>Do you regularly speak a language other than English?</p>

SENSE OF BELONGING

OVERVIEW

A sense of belonging has been defined as a ‘settled feeling’ related to the confidence or trust we have in the world around us, and in the things, and the people, we encounter in our lives. When we feel a sense of belonging, we feel our needs are being met or reinforced, we feel membership to a society and smaller communities, and we feel that we can have influence over that community. Concepts like belonging and community identity have a long association in communication research and have been found to have a relational link to media use.

Belonging has meaning at different levels of society. Broadly, people will feel a sense of belonging to Australian society. People will also feel a sense of belonging to a cultural or language community and a local community more narrowly.

Throughout this study, a sense of belonging is identified through four elements that are measured by the following community-based statements:

- Membership: I feel at home in my community
- Reinforcement of needs: My needs are met because I am part of a community
- Shared emotional connection: Members of my community care about each other
- Influence: I have influence over my community



Traditional foods being served at Lakemba Nights During Ramadan in Lakemba, Sydney.



“Feeling like I belong in Australia would mean being part of a supportive community, feeling respected and accepted for who I am, and contributing meaningfully to society. It’s about building connections, understanding the culture, and feeling at home in daily life.”

(Arabic speaker)

FINDINGS

Sense of belonging among multilingual audiences

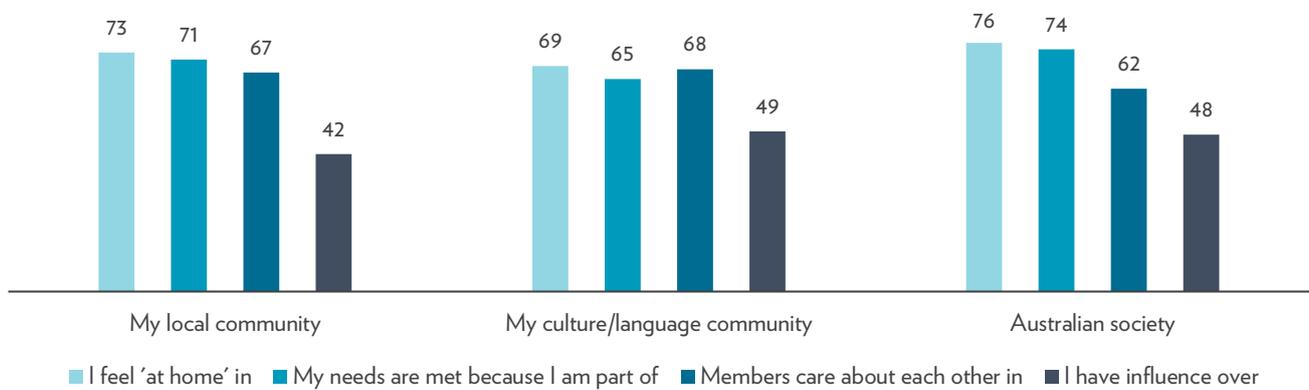
Among the four elements of a sense of community, membership — feeling at home — ranks the highest followed by reinforcement of needs and shared emotional connection. The perception of having an influence ranks the lowest (Figure 1). This is mostly consistent across all three community types — local, cultural/language, and Australian society.

Membership and reinforcement of needs are the highest in Australian society, with three-quarters of respondents saying that they feel at home in Australia (76%) and that their needs are met because they are part of Australian society (74%).

However, respondents felt that members care about each other more among their culture/language (68%) and local (67%) communities than in the broader Australian society (62%).

Less than half respondents believe they have influence over their local (42%) and cultural/language (49%) communities and Australian society (48%). This is significantly lower than the levels of agreement with the other three elements of community belonging.

FIGURE 1 | Sense of belonging among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (% agree)



Sense of belonging and the nuances among multilingual communities

Of all six language communities, Punjabi speakers are overall the most likely to say they belong to all three types of community, with four in five agreeing their needs are met because they are part of their local (82%) or cultural/language (81%) communities or Australian society (82%) (Figures 2–4). In contrast, Mandarin speakers are among the least likely to feel they belong, reporting the lowest levels of belonging in their local (65%) or cultural/language (58%) community or Australian society (68%).

Being accepted and feeling safe was key to one Mandarin respondent in feeling a sense of belonging:

“Feeling like I belong in Australia means being accepted for who I am, regardless of my background, and having a sense of community where I can contribute and feel valued. It’s also about feeling safe, having equal opportunities, and being able to celebrate my culture while embracing the diversity of others.” (Mandarin speaker).

When it comes to community membership, Italian speakers are most likely to say they feel at home in the local community they live in (80%) or Australian society (85%):

“Actively participating in community activities and collaborating with others during these events, this sense of community cohesion makes one feel like a part of the big Australian family.” (Italian speaker).

Punjabi and Vietnamese speakers feel at home the most in their cultural/language communities (73%). Comparing the six language communities with the general population, we found that the general population would be the least likely to feel that they belong, with less than one-third saying they do not have influence over their local (26%) or cultural/language (29%) community.

FIGURE 2 | Sense of belonging in Australian society by multilingual community (% agree)

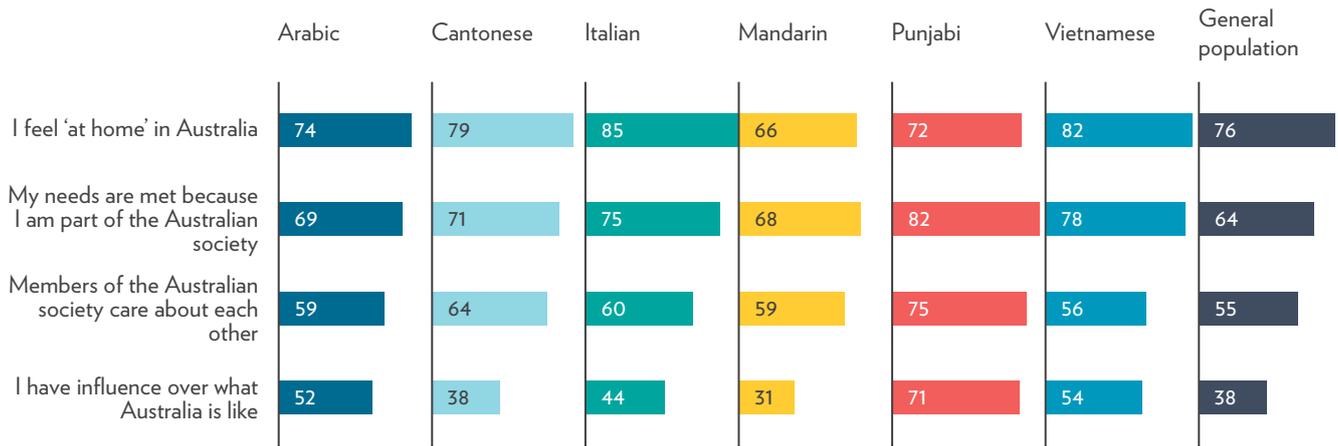


FIGURE 3 | Sense of belonging in cultural/language community by multilingual community (% agree)

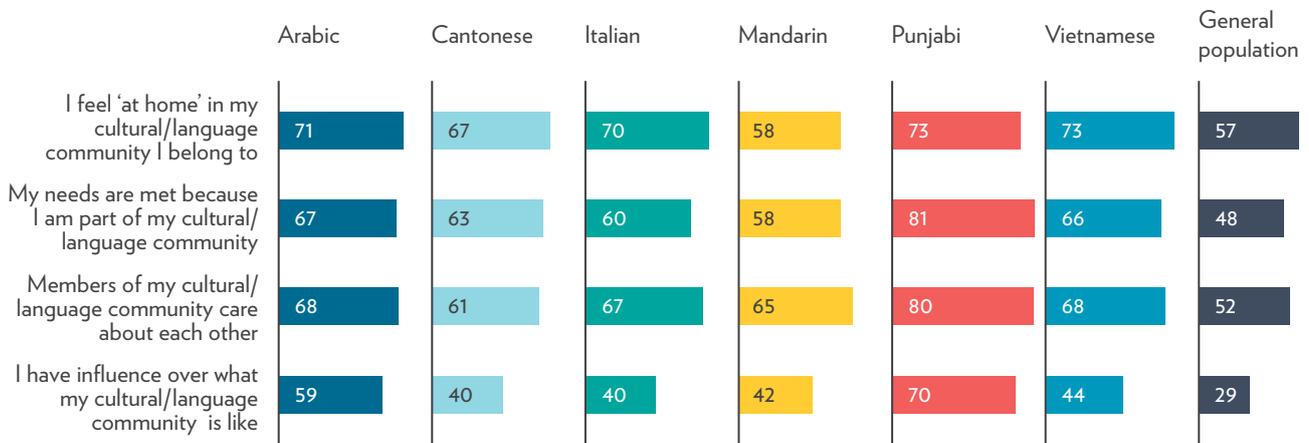
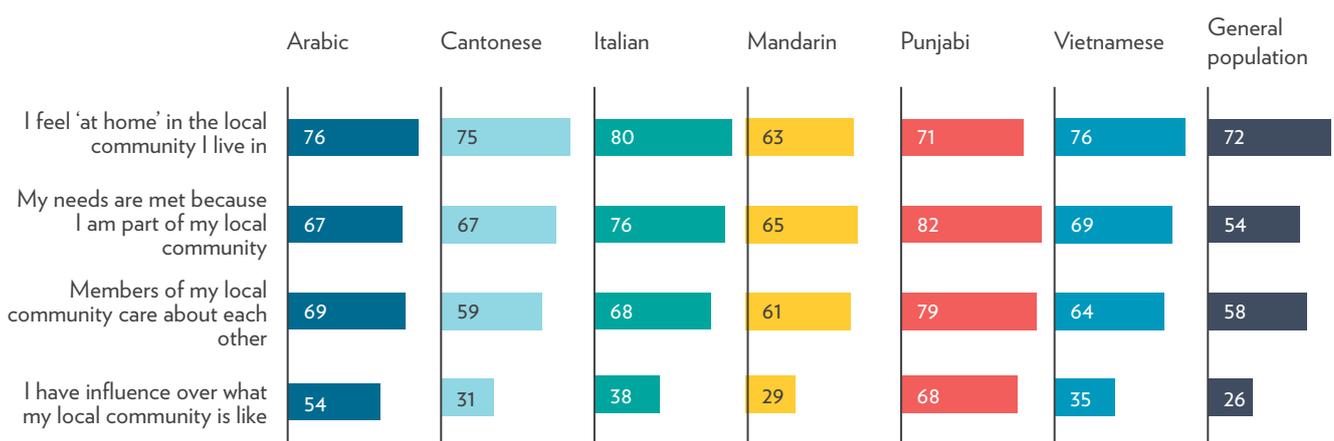


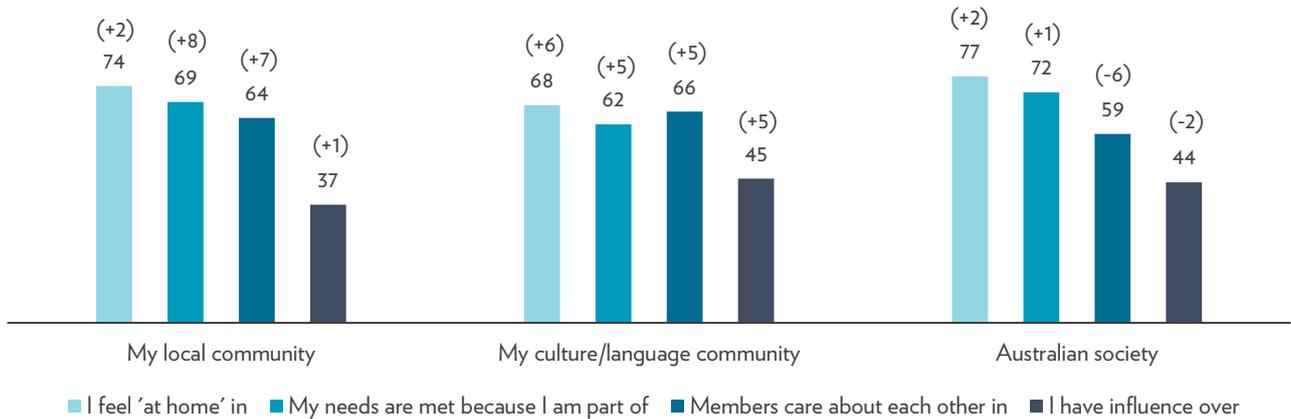
FIGURE 4 | Sense of belonging in local community by multilingual community (% agree)



A comparison of the results from five language communities (Arabic, Cantonese, Italian, Mandarin, and Vietnamese) between Wave 1 and Wave 2 shows an overall increase in their sense of belonging (Figure 5). Sense of belonging in local and cultural/language communities has increased across all four dimensions. Notably, more people say their needs are met (69%, +8pp) and that members care about each other (64%, +7pp) in their local

communities — significant increases from Wave 1. Despite a slight increase in a sense of membership and reinforcement of needs in Australian society, less people say members care about each other (59%, -6pp) and that they have influence (44%, -2pp) in society.

FIGURE 5 | Sense of belonging by community type: Wave 1 vs. Wave 2 (five language communities) (% agree)

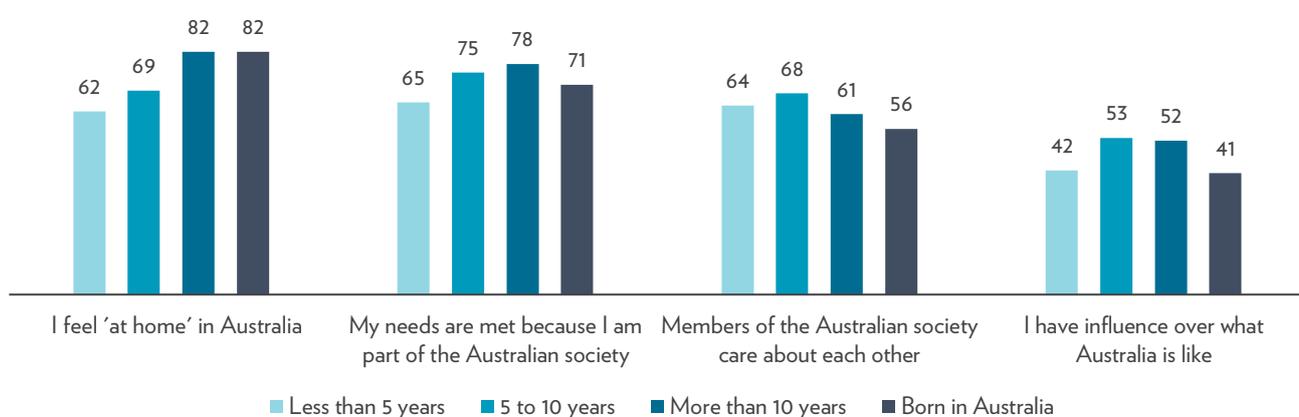


Sense of belonging and time spent living in Australia

Time spent living in Australia is also related to multilingual audiences' sense of belonging. Those who were born in Australia or have been living in Australia for more than 10 years are more likely to feel at home in Australia (82%), compared to those who have spent 5–10 years (69%) or less than five years (62%) living in Australia. These respondents are also more likely to say their needs are met (more than 10 years, 78%; 5–10 years, 75%)

compared to those born in Australia (71%) or those who have spent less than five years in Australia (65%). Again, these medium- to long-term residents are most likely to say they have influence in society. These results suggest that the longer the tenure in Australia the stronger the sense of belonging people feel (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6 | Sense of belonging in Australian society by time spent living in Australia (six language communities) (% agree)

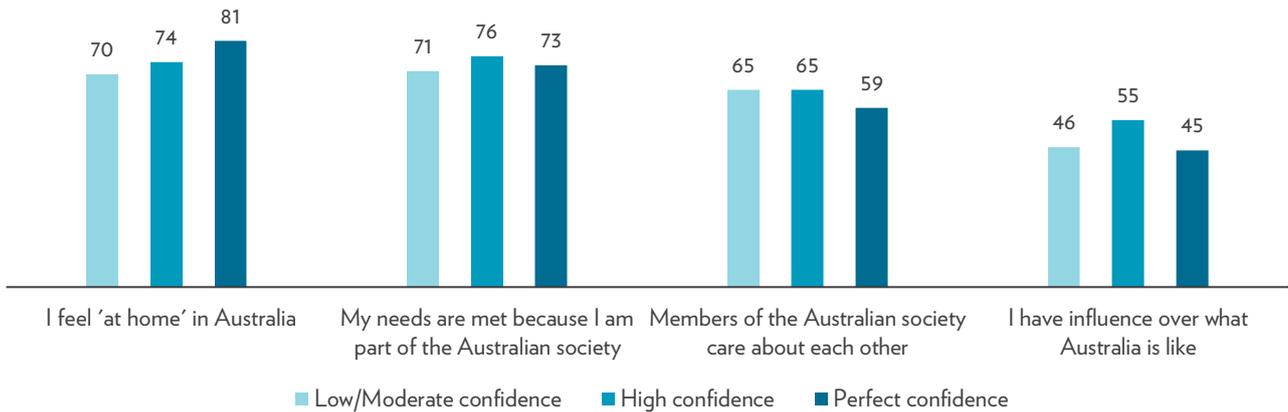


Sense of belonging and confidence in English

Confidence in English language skills is another important factor that can contribute to audiences' sense of belonging. Respondents with perfect confidence in English are most likely to feel at home in Australia (81%), and there is an 11 percentage point gap between those with perfect confidence and those with low to moderate confidence. However, in terms of believing that

members of the society care for each other, those with highest English skills scored the lowest (59%). These respondents also scored the lowest in having influence over society (45%) (Figure 7). This may be because those born in Australia have the highest confidence in English and yet their perception of influence and care are among the lowest.

FIGURE 7 | Sense of belonging in Australian society by confidence in English (six language communities) (% agree)



Comparing the longitudinal results of the five language communities (Arabic, Cantonese, Italian, Mandarin, and Vietnamese) since Wave 1, those with low/moderate confidence in English show an upward trend in their sense of belonging

(Figure 8). In contrast, there has been a decrease in the influence and shared emotional connection elements of belonging among people with high confidence (-4 and -4 respectively) or perfect confidence (-3 and -11 respectively).

FIGURE 8 | Sense of belonging in Australian society by confidence in English: Wave 1 vs. Wave 2 (five language communities) (% agree)

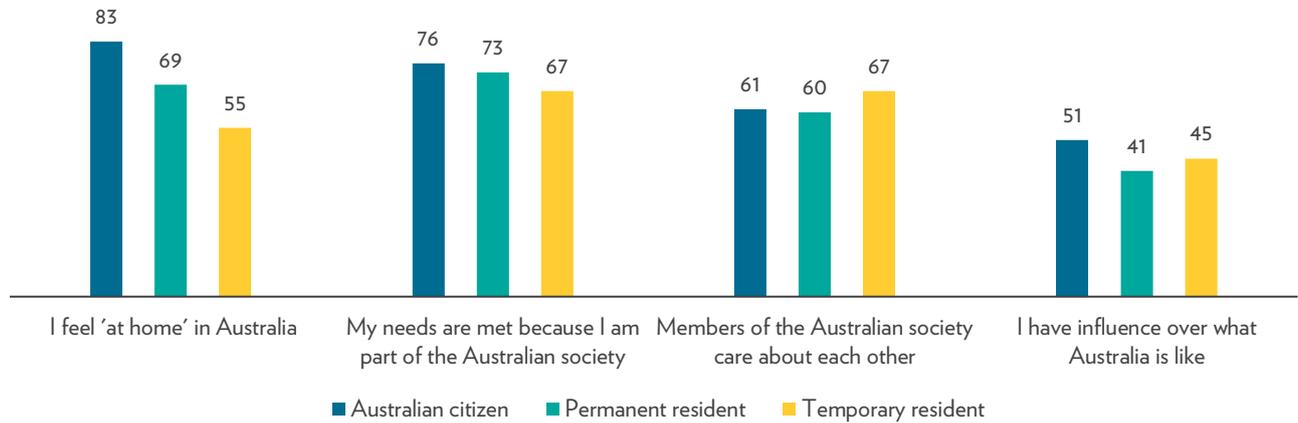


Sense of belonging and type of residency

There are notable differences in respondents' sense of belonging based on their residential status. Respondents with Australian citizenship are more likely to feel at home in Australia (83%) and that their needs are met in Australian society (76%), compared to permanent residents (69% and 73% respectively) and temporary

residents (55% and 67% respectively) (Figure 9). However, temporary residents are among the most likely to say members of Australian society care about each other (67%). Regardless of the residential status, influence over what Australia is like has the lowest agreement.

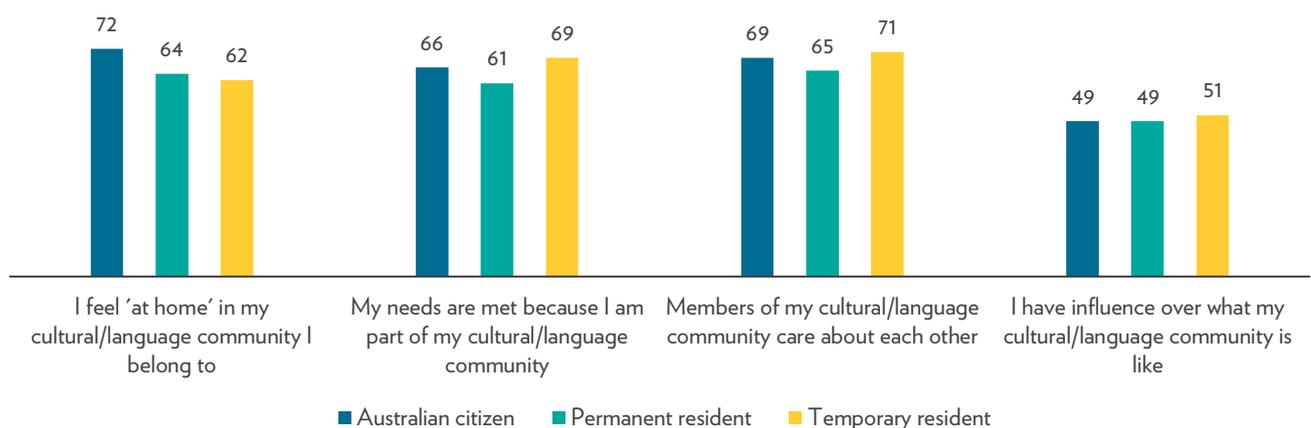
FIGURE 9 | Sense of belonging in Australian society by type of residency (six language communities) (% agree)



When it comes to respondents' sense of belonging in their cultural/language communities, Australian citizenship holders are most likely to experience a sense of membership (72%), while temporary residents are most likely to feel a shared emotional connection (71%) and reinforcement of needs (69%) in these

communities. Similar to the sense of belonging in Australian society, respondents across the residential status have the lowest level of agreement on having influence over their cultural/language or local communities (Figure 10).

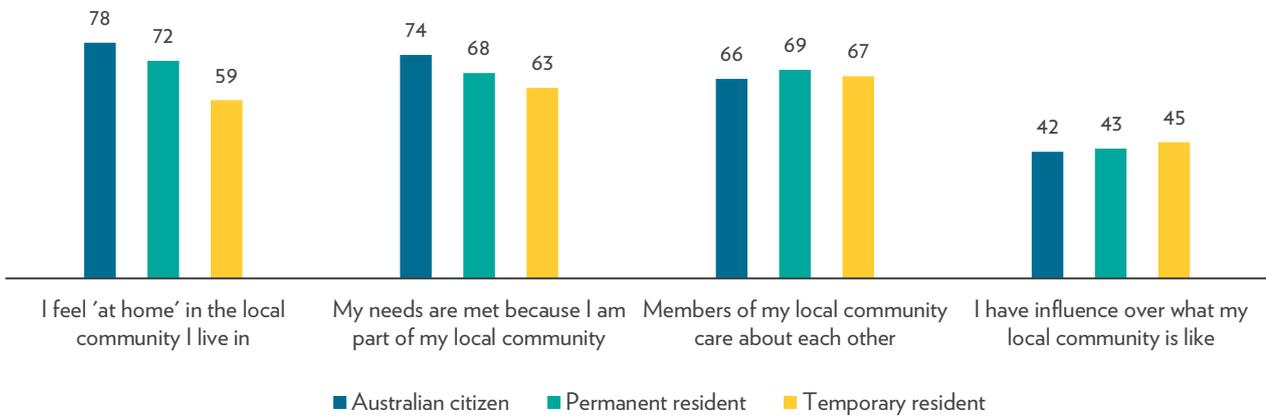
FIGURE 10 | Sense of belonging in cultural/language community by type of residency (six language communities) (% agree)



Australian citizenship holders also report the highest level of agreement on membership (78%) and reinforcement of needs (74%) in their local communities, while permanent residents are

most likely to feel a shared emotional connection with these communities (69%) (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11 | Sense of belonging in local community by type of residency (six language communities) (% agree)

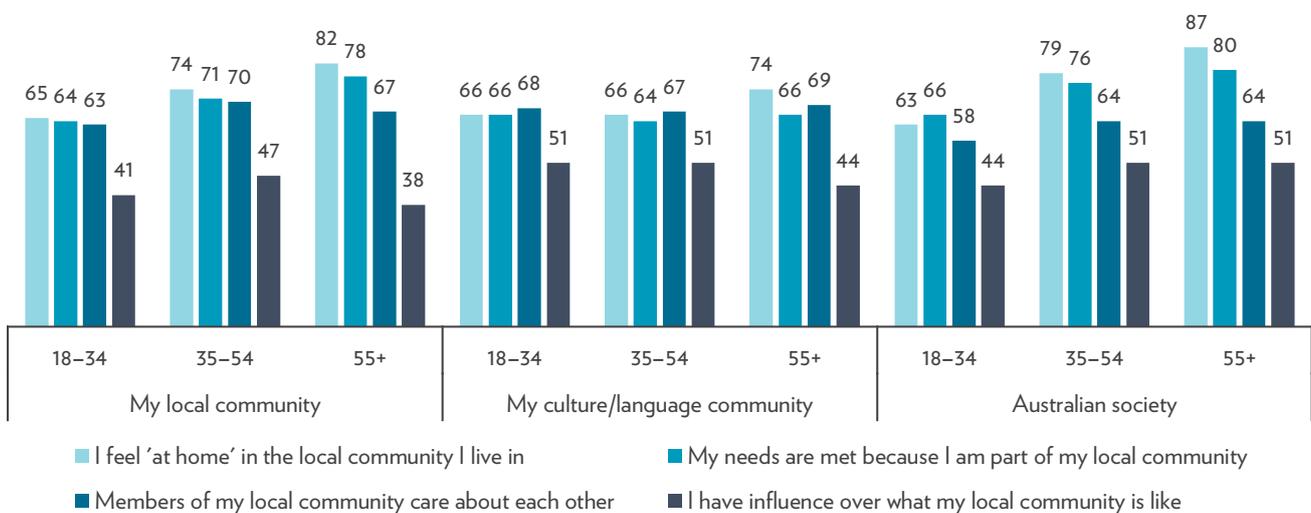


Sense of belonging by age

When comparing across age groups, younger multilingual communities tend to report lower levels of belonging than older respondents, particularly in relation to Australian society. Only two-thirds of respondents aged 18–34 say their needs are met (66%) and that they feel at home (63%) in Australian society, compared to 76–79% among those aged 35–54, and 80–87% among those aged 55+. This generational gap is also evident in perceived influence. Only 44% of respondents aged 18–34 feel they have influence over Australian society, compared to 51% of those aged 35 and over.

However, this gap narrows when considering belonging at the local and cultural/language community levels. Notably, younger respondents are more likely to say they have influence over their cultural or language community, with 51% of those aged 18–54 agreeing, compared to only 44% of those aged 55+ (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12 | Sense of belonging by age (six language communities) (% agree)

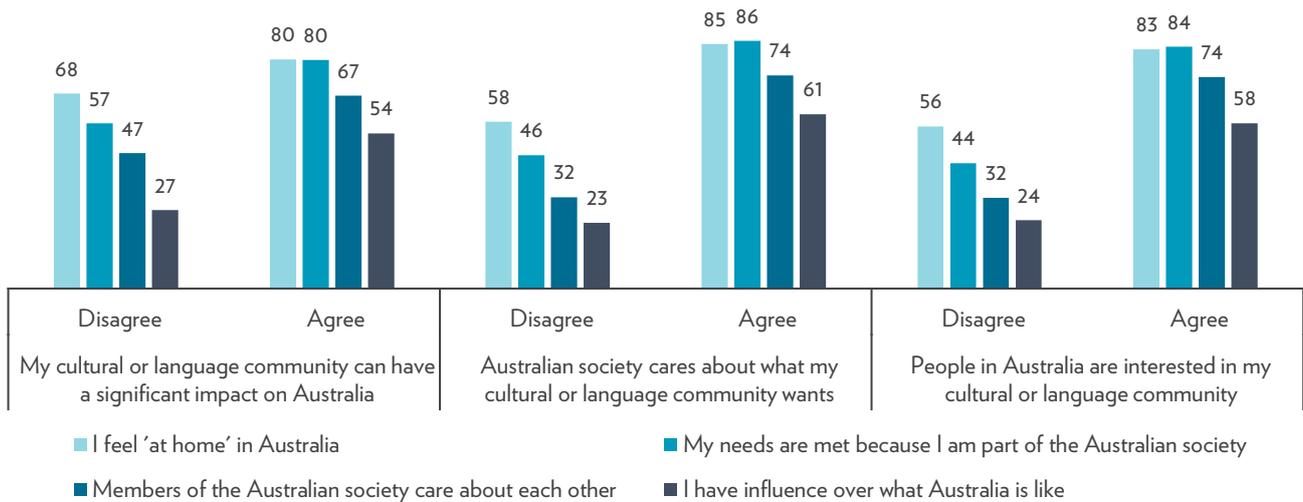


Sense of belonging and collective efficacy

Figure 13 shows the positive relationship between collective efficacy and sense of belonging among multilingual respondents. Those who agree that their cultural or language community can have a significant impact on Australia are much more likely to feel a sense of belonging to Australian society. Four in five respondents (80%) who hold this belief also report feeling at home in Australia and part of Australian society, compared to 68% and 57% respectively among those who disagree.

Similarly, those who believe their community can make an impact are also much more likely to express confidence in their own influence over Australian society (54%) and to feel that members of society care about one another (67%), compared to just 34% and 47% among those who disagree.

FIGURE 13 | Sense of belonging in Australian society by collective efficacy (six language communities) (%)

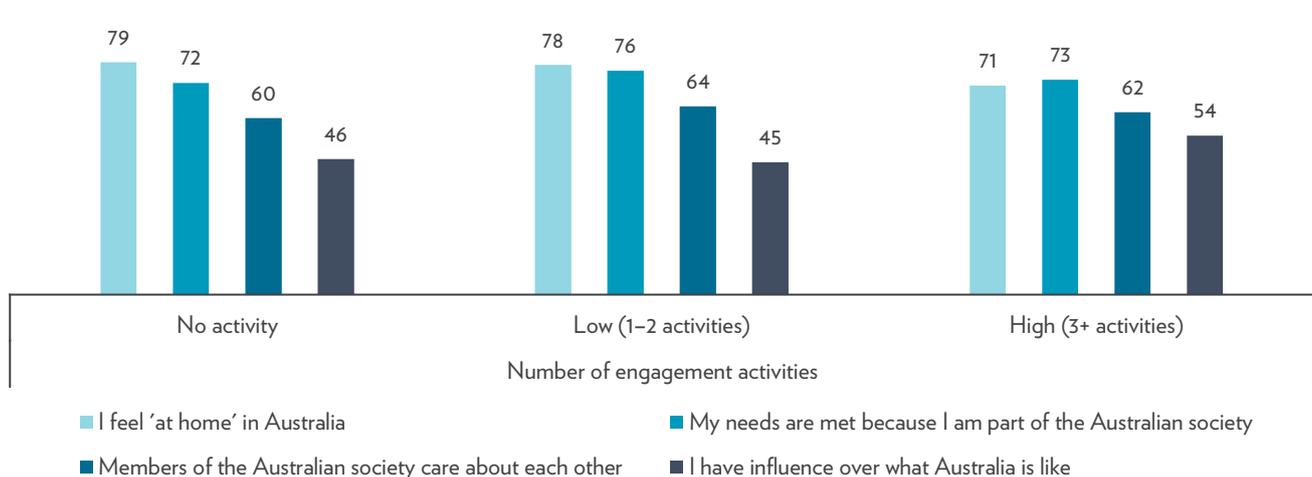


Sense of belonging and civic participation

Civic participation is an important part of being a member of society and is related to people's sense of belonging (see details about civic participation on page 30). Overall, the data shows a weak relationship between civic participation and a sense of belonging in Australian society. More than 70% of respondents

feel at home and say that their needs are met regardless of the number of engagement activities they participate in (Figure 14). It is possible that the type of activities matters more than the number of activities in influencing feelings of belonging.

FIGURE 14 | Sense of belonging in Australian society by civic participation (six language communities) (% agree)

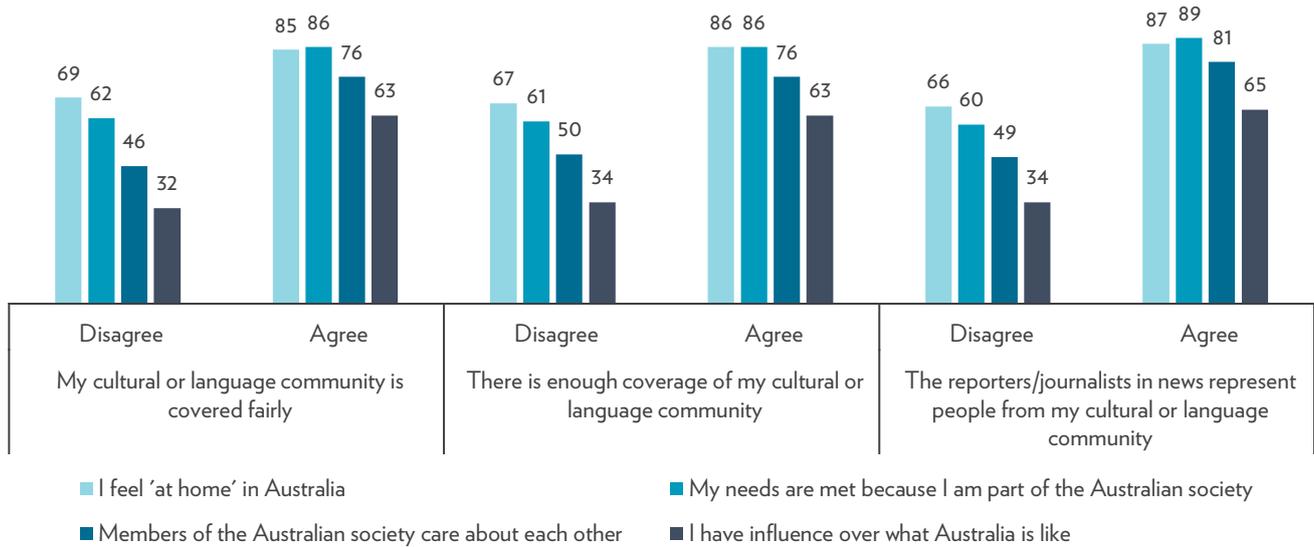


Sense of belonging and news representation

The data shows a strong relationship between how audiences feel about the news coverage related to their cultural backgrounds and their sense of belonging in Australian society. Overall, respondents who feel their community is represented in the news indicate a much stronger sense of belonging across the four elements, compared to those who see no/low representation

of their community in the news (Figure 15). Importantly, those who feel that their cultural/language community is covered fairly, that there is enough coverage of their community, and that the news reporters/journalists represent their community are nearly twice as likely to say they have influence over what Australia is like — 63%, 63%, and 65% respectively.

FIGURE 15 | Sense of belonging in Australian society by news representation (six language communities) (% agree)

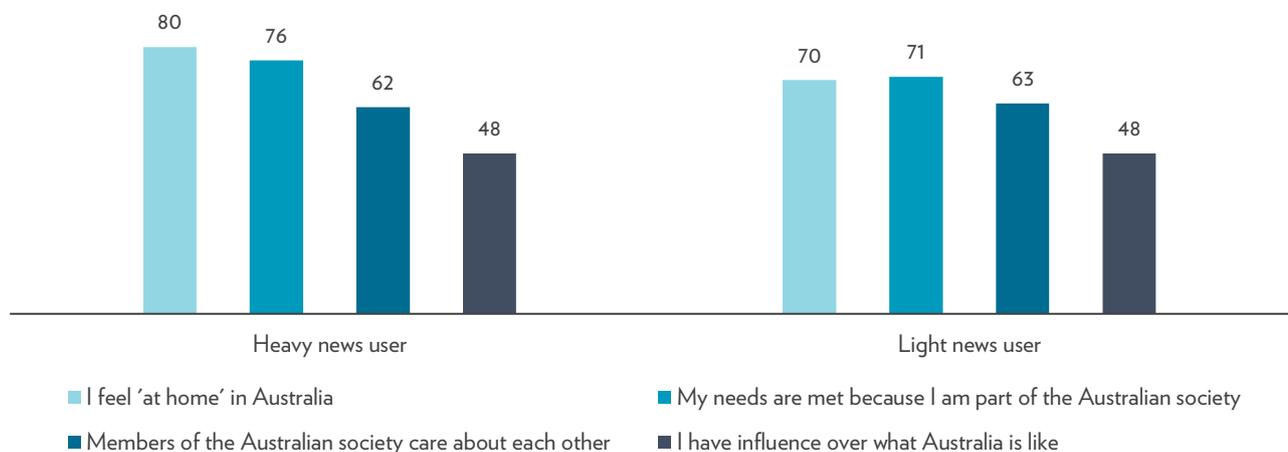


Sense of belonging and news access

Heavy news users — those who access news more than once a day — are more likely to feel at home in Australia (80%) and that their needs are met in society (76%), compared to light news users (70% and 71% respectively). However, between heavy and

light news consumers there is no difference in what we call the 'shared emotional connection' element of belonging — 'care about each other' and the 'influence' elements (Figure 16).

FIGURE 16 | Sense of belonging in Australian society by news access (six language communities) (% agree)



SUMMARY

Multilingual communities have the lowest sense of influence over their community and society among the four elements of belonging. They are more likely to feel at home in Australia but less confident about making an impact on society. However, there was a varied sense of belonging across the six language speakers: Punjabi speakers indicate the highest sense of belonging across all community types, while Mandarin speakers feel the least connected. Residency status has an impact on belonging and temporary residents have the lowest sense of belonging. On the other hand, English confidence alone does not guarantee a person's connection to society. Factors such as time spent in Australia, collective efficacy of the language community, civic participation, and perceptions of being fairly represented in the news are all important. Older community members report higher levels of belonging as they feel more at home in the local community, the cultural/language community and Australian society.

Lion dancing at Lunar New Year celebrations in Cabramatta, Sydney.



“What makes me feel like I belong in Australia is the sense of community and the way people are so welcoming. Australia’s diversity and laid-back attitude make it easy to connect with others and feel at home. It’s the small things, like how open and friendly people are, and the way everyone seems to value fairness and hard work. I also love how there’s space to grow and be yourself. Whether it’s through the opportunities I’ve had or just being part of such a vibrant, multicultural environment, I’ve always felt like I can contribute and be appreciated. That’s what makes me feel like I truly belong here.” (Cantonese speaker)

PARTICIPATION: COLLECTIVE EFFICACY AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

OVERVIEW

Participation is the level of meaningful engagement in activities that connect people with family and friends, communities, and broader society. Participation can be social or political. Studies have shown a link between social participation and greater physical and mental health outcomes³. Being connected through meaningful social engagement enables individuals to feel a part of a community, while also fostering social cohesion, strengthening democratic participation, and promoting a more inclusive society.

In this study, we adopted two measures to capture multilingual audiences' participation in society in a meaningful way: collective efficacy and civic participation.

Collective efficacy is group members' perception that their group is capable of reaching its goals. It refers to the willingness of local residents to intervene on behalf of the common good.⁴ We applied this concept in the context of cultural and language communities, where members share the same goal and rely on each other to achieve common goals. This sense of agency as a group is related to people's willingness to participate in society.

The second concept is civic participation. It is defined as individuals' involvement in political and social activities that contribute to public life and community well-being. Types of activities include discussing issues with others, contacting political representatives or organisations, signing petitions, joining advocacy groups, and collaborating with others to address societal issues.^{5,6} These activities are increasingly shifting online, where digital environments serve as key arenas for community building, civic mobilisation, and public engagement. We measured civic participation across both in-person and online activities to reflect the diverse and evolving ways individuals engage in public life.

This section examines multilingual audiences' participation in society and its relationship to their language proficiency, length of stay in Australia, perception of news representation, and news consumption habits.

³ Kim, Y. & Ball-Rokeach, S. (2006). Community storytelling network, neighborhood context, and civic engagement: A multilevel approach. *Human Communication Research*, 32, 411–439.

⁴ Sampson, R. J. (2006). How does community context matter? Social mechanisms and the explanation of crime rates. In P.-O. H. Wikström & R. J. Sampson (Eds.), *The explanation of crime: Context, mechanisms and development* (pp. 31–60). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁵ Choi, M., Glassman, M., & Cristol, D. (2017). What it means to be a citizen in the internet age: Development of a reliable and valid digital citizenship scale. *Computers & education*, 107, 100–112.

⁶ Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research. (2023). *The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes: National Identity and Citizenship*.

“The cultural activities and social gatherings help to make a new social life [in Australia].”

(Punjabi speaker)



Community members participating in Diwali celebrations at Marsden Park, Sydney.

FINDINGS

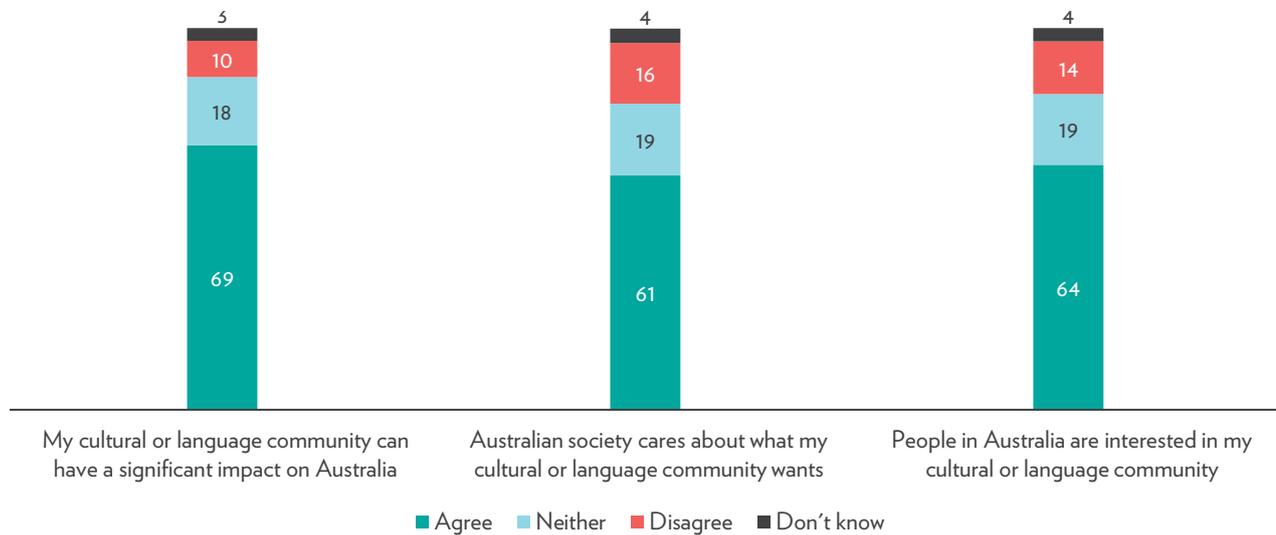
Collective efficacy

We asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with three statements: ‘My cultural or language community can have a significant impact on Australia’, ‘Australian society cares about what my cultural or language community wants’, and ‘People in Australia are interested in my cultural or language community’.

More than two-thirds of respondents from multilingual communities agree that their cultural or language community can have a significant impact on Australian society (69%). This

is significantly higher than respondents’ perception of their individual influence, which is only 48% (Figure 1). As a group, people feel they have more influence. A similar proportion of respondents say that people in Australia are interested in my cultural or language community (64%). However, fewer respondents (61%) feel that Australian society cares about the needs of their cultural or language community (Figure 17).

FIGURE 17 | Collective efficacy among multilingual communities (six language communities) (%)



“Things that make me feel like I belong in Australia is the cultural acceptance that people in Australia have for foreigners, especially indulging themselves in Vietnamese cultural activities and traditions such as food, events and our celebratory manners/ behaviours. The education system is also very inclusive by promoting diversity and celebrating multiculturalism through special dates that enables younger generations to be aware of their surroundings and be welcoming.” (Vietnamese speaker)

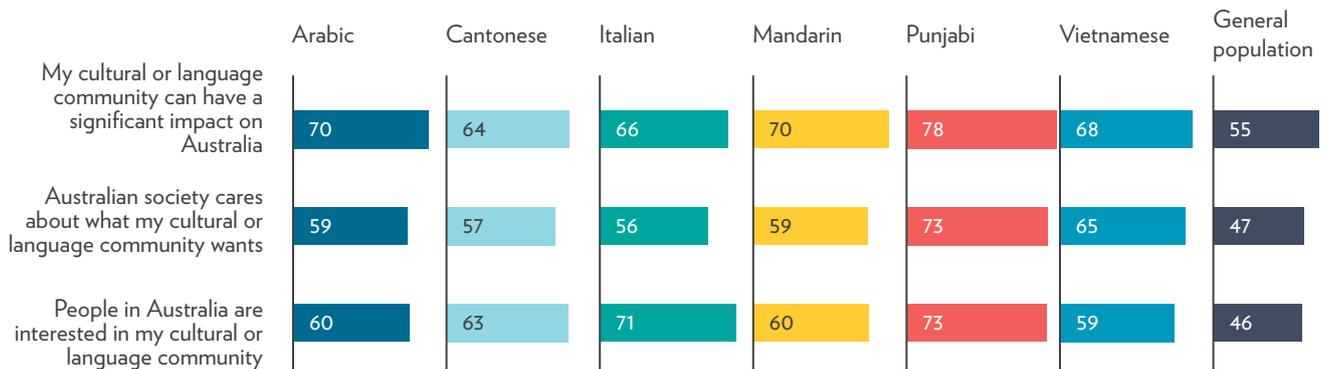
“I have family and friends in Australia. I have started a family and a career in Australia, which makes me feel a sense of belonging to Australia.” (Cantonese speaker)

Among language communities, Punjabi speakers report the highest levels of collective efficacy. Most Punjabi speakers (78%) say that their community has a significant impact on Australian society, and 73% say that people in Australia are interested in their community and that Australian society cares about what their community wants.

Cantonese speakers report the lowest levels of collective efficacy. Only two-third (64%) say their community can have

a significant impact on Australian society and 57% believe Australian society cares about what their community wants. However, when it comes to perceived interest from broader Australian society, 63% of Cantonese speakers say people are interested, which is higher than Arabic (60%), Mandarin (60%), and Vietnamese speakers (59%) (Figure 18).

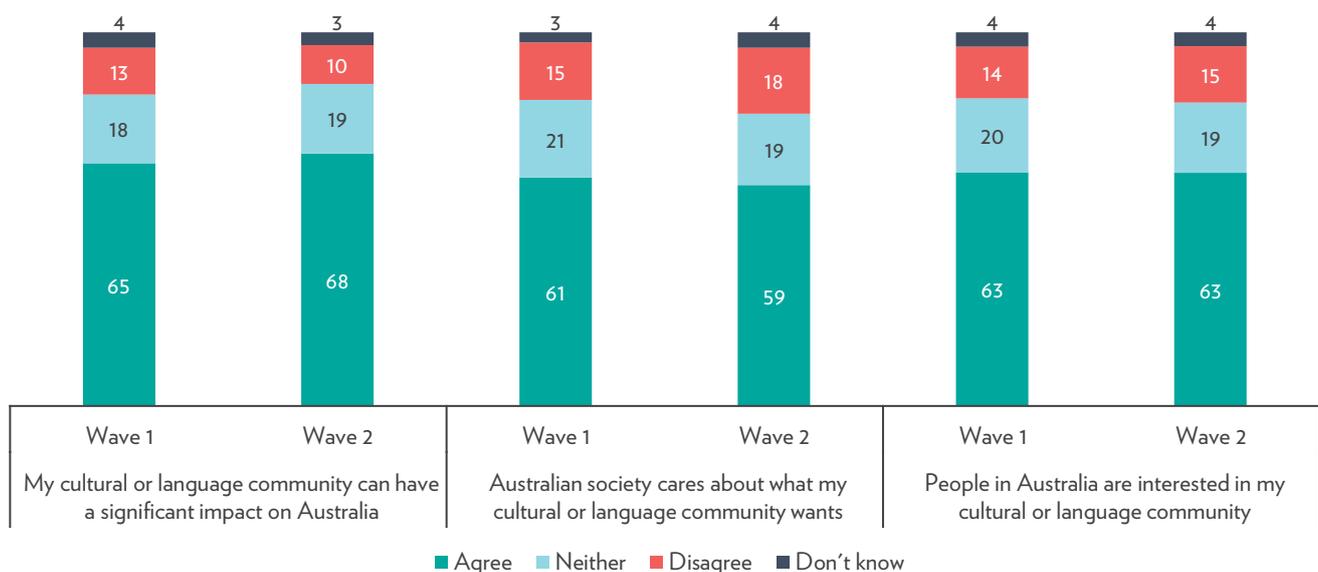
FIGURE 18 | Collective efficacy by multilingual community (% agree)



Compared to Wave 1, there has been an increase in the proportion of respondents from five language communities (Arabic, Cantonese, Italian, Mandarin, and Vietnamese) who believe their cultural or language community can have a significant impact on Australian society (68%, +3) (Figure 19). However, the proportion of those who feel that Australian society cares about what their community wants has declined

slightly, from 61% in 2023 to 59% in 2025 (see Figure 5). This downward shift aligns with a broader decline in the perception that members of Australian society care about one another (Figure 5). The proportion of respondents who believe that people in Australia are interested in their cultural or language community has remained stable over the same period.

FIGURE 19 | Collective efficacy among multilingual community: Wave 1 vs. Wave 2 (five language communities) (%)



Collective efficacy and time spent living in Australia and confidence in English

Collective efficacy is associated with both length of time in Australia and confidence in English. Respondents who have lived in Australia for less than five years, and those with low/moderate English proficiency are the least likely to say their community has a significant impact on Australian society (62% and 67% respectively). Respondents born in Australia and those with

perfect confidence in English are less likely to feel that Australian society cares about what their cultural or language community wants, with just over half agreeing (53% and 55% respectively) (Figures 20 and 21).

FIGURE 20 | Collective efficacy among multilingual community by time spent in Australia (six language communities) (% agree)

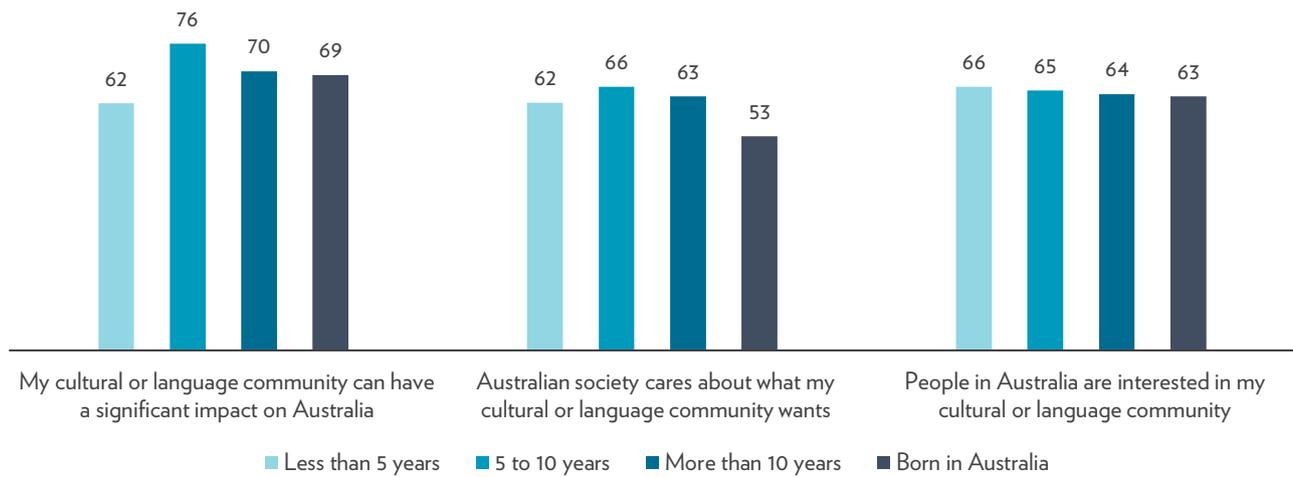


FIGURE 21 | Collective efficacy among multilingual communities by confidence in English (six language communities) (% agree)

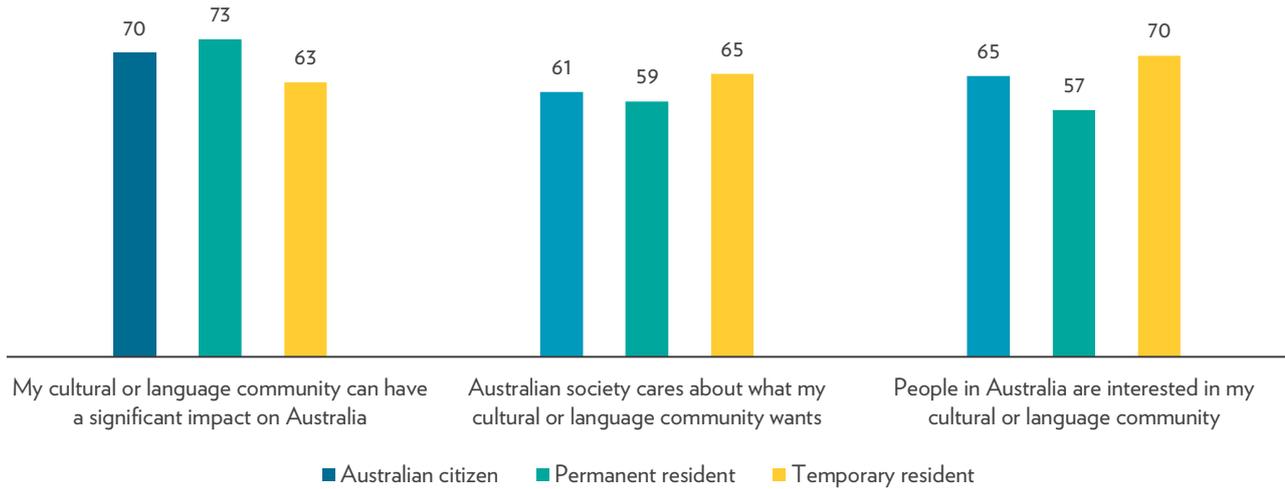


Collective efficacy and type of residency

Temporary visa holders are more likely to say that people in Australia are interested in their cultural/language communities (70%) compared to Australian citizens (65%) and permanent residents (57%). Similarly, 65% of temporary visa holders believe Australian society cares about what their community wants, which is higher than that of Australian citizens (61%) or

permanent residents (59%). In contrast, temporary visa holders have lower collective efficacy. Less than one-third (63%) agree that their community can have a significant impact on Australia, in contrast to 70% of Australian citizens and 73% of permanent residents (Figure 22).

FIGURE 22 | Collective efficacy among multilingual communities by type of residency (six language communities) (% agree)

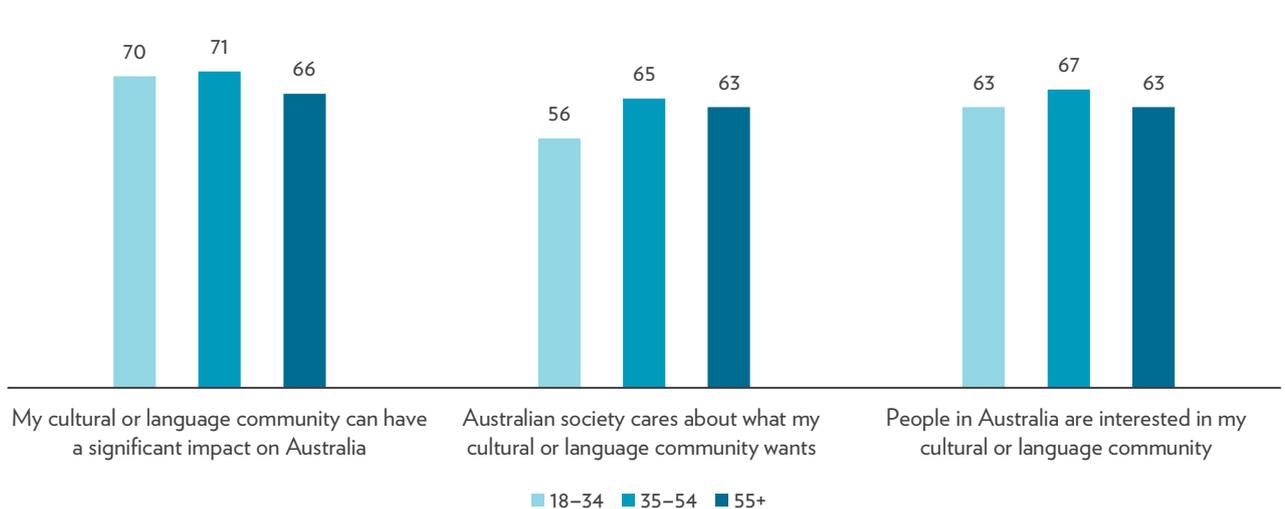


Collective efficacy by age

Younger multilingual audiences are more likely to believe their cultural or language community can have a significant impact on Australia, with seven in 10 respondents aged 18–54 agreeing (70%–71%), compared to 66% of those aged 55+. However, when asked whether Australian society cares about their community’s

needs, younger respondents are less confident. Only 56% of those aged 18–34 agree, compared to nearly two-thirds of those aged 35 and over (63–65%). Overall, respondents aged 35–54 report the highest levels of collective efficacy, compared to their younger and older counterparts (Figure 23).

FIGURE 23 | Collective efficacy among multilingual communities by age (six language communities) (% agree)

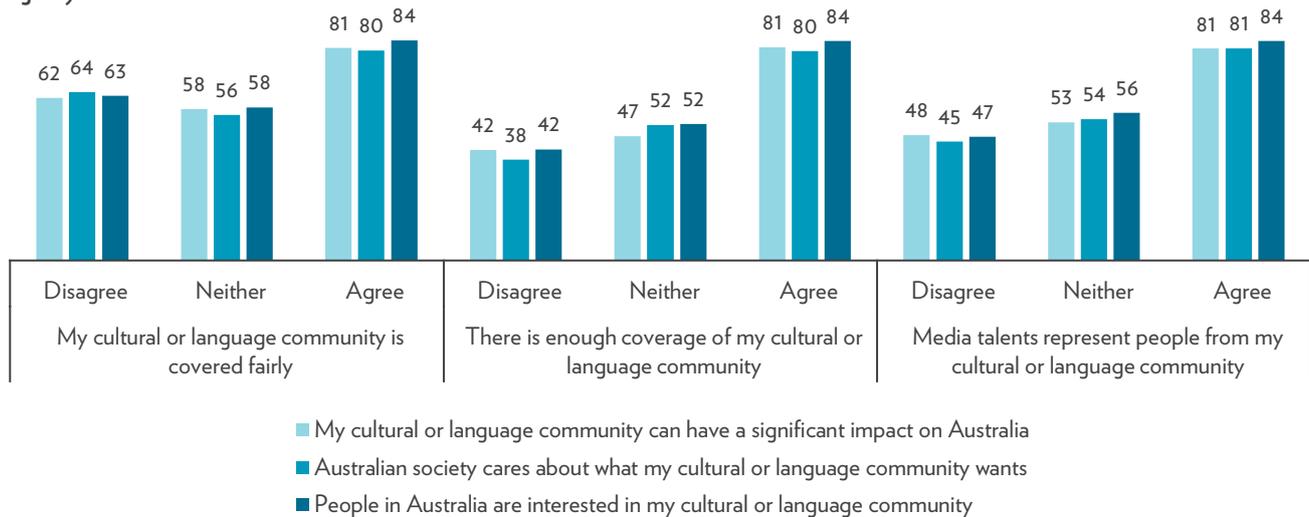


Collective efficacy and media representation

Respondents' perception that Australian media represents their cultural or language community is strongly related to multilingual audiences' collective efficacy. Respondents who feel their cultural or language community is covered fairly in Australian media are much more likely to report higher levels of collective efficacy across all measures. Media is defined broadly and means all platforms and channels that are available and can be consumed in Australia.

Similarly, respondents who feel their cultural or language community is covered fairly and sufficiently in Australian media and represented by media talents are much more likely to report higher levels of collective efficacy across all measures (Figure 24).

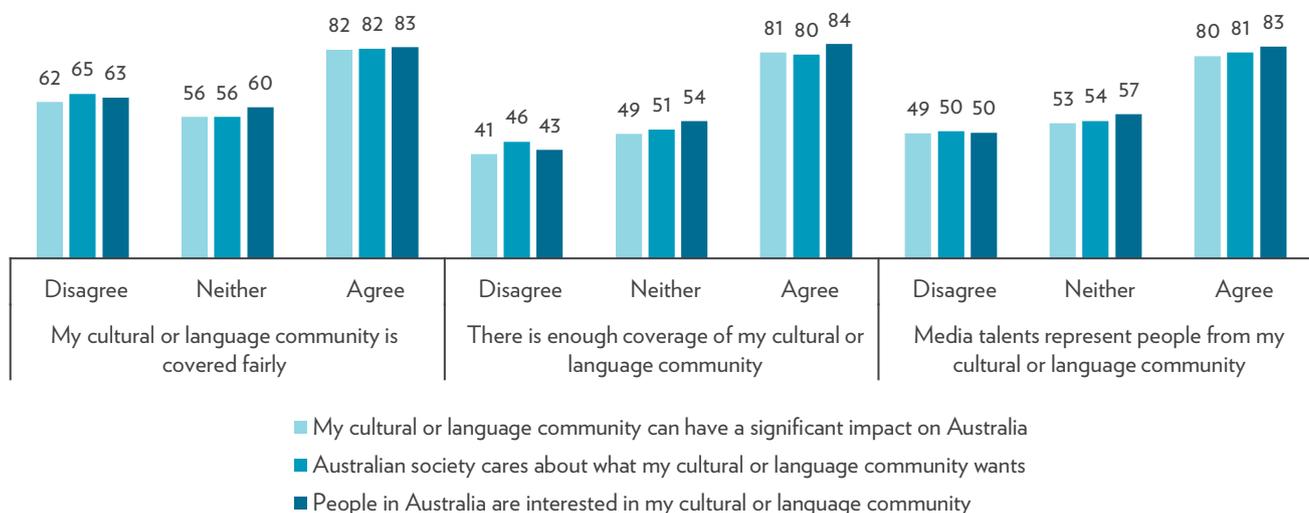
FIGURE 24 | Collective efficacy among multilingual communities by media representation (six language communities) (% agree)



Similarly, those who feel their language community is represented in the news are more likely to have a higher collective efficacy. More than four-fifths of these respondents agreed that their community could have a significant impact on Australian society (82%), that Australian society cares about their community (82%), and that people in Australia are interested in

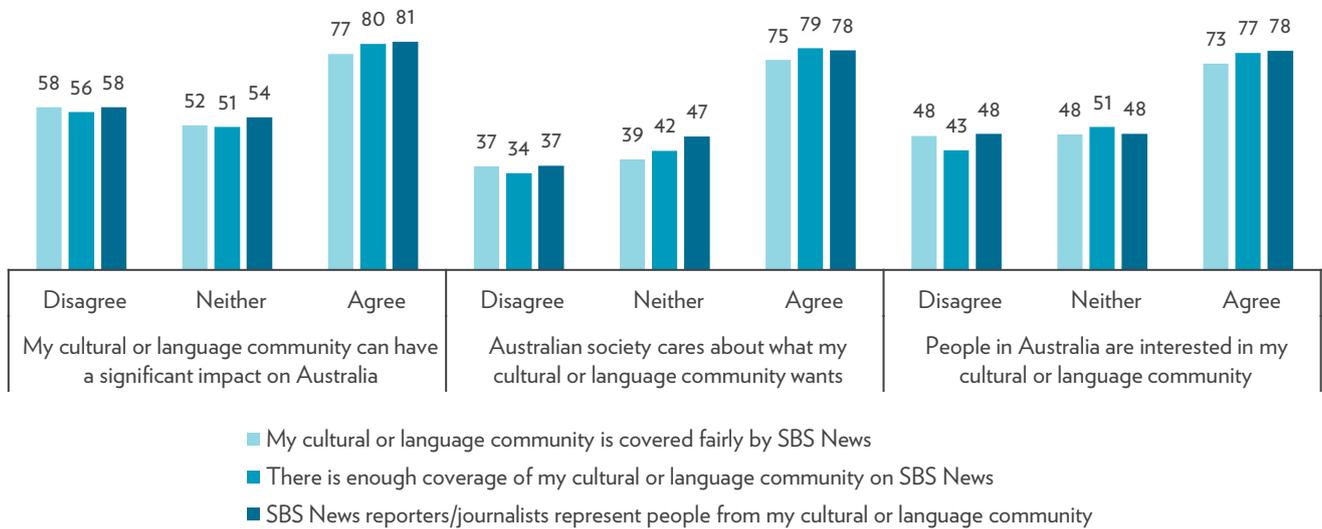
their community (83%). In contrast, among those who felt their community was not covered fairly, only around two-thirds agreed with the statements related to collective efficacy (Figure 25). News media is defined as the information gathered, verified, and shared by journalists, media organisations, and other platforms about recent events.

FIGURE 25 | Collective efficacy among multilingual communities by news representation (six language communities) (% agree)



A similar pattern was observed in relation to SBS News. As shown in Figure 26, those who perceived fair and sufficient coverage and representation by SBS reporters/journalists also reported consistently higher levels of collective efficacy.

FIGURE 26 | Collective efficacy of the cultural/language community by representation in SBS News (six language communities) (% agree)



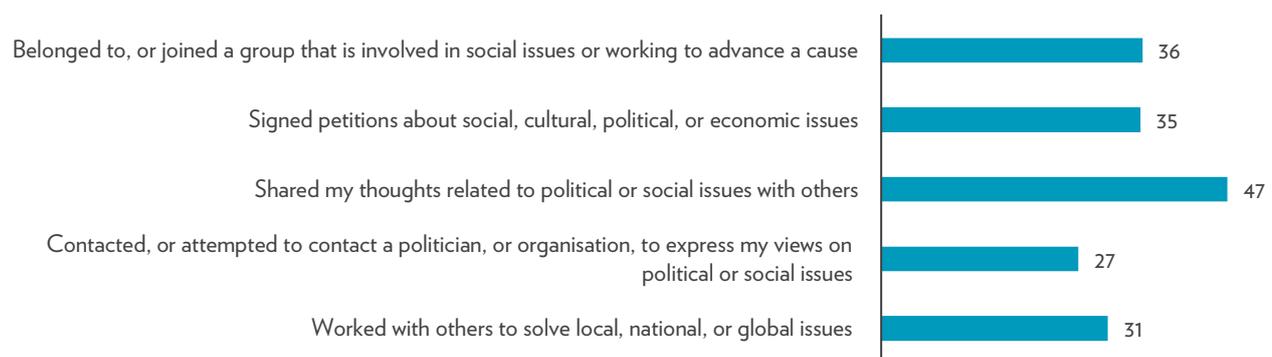
Civic participation

We asked respondents about their participation in civic activities, in-person and online. Nearly two-thirds (63%) reported engaging in at least one of the listed activities through either mode.

Sharing views on political or social issues is the most common civic participation activity, with almost half (47%) saying they shared thoughts related to political or social issues with others. More than one in three respondents have joined a group working on social issues or causes (36%) or signed a petition (35%).

More direct forms of civic participation, such as working with others to address local, national, or international issues (31%) or contacting a politician or organisation to express views on political or social matters (27%), are less commonly reported (Figure 27).

FIGURE 27 | Civic participation among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (%)



Mandarin and Punjabi speakers are the most likely to report engaging in at least one civic activity (70%), followed by Italian (66%) and Arabic (64%) speakers. These figures are notably higher than the general population (62%). In contrast, Cantonese and Vietnamese speakers report lower levels of engagement, with 49% and 58% having taken part in any of the listed civic

activities respectively (Figure 28). This lower engagement may be linked to language barriers. Only 73% of Cantonese and 77% of Vietnamese speakers have high or perfect confidence in English, which is much lower than those of Arabic (88%), Mandarin (84%), Punjabi (91%), and Italian speakers (98%).

FIGURE 28 | Civic participation by multilingual communities (% have engaged in at least one activity)

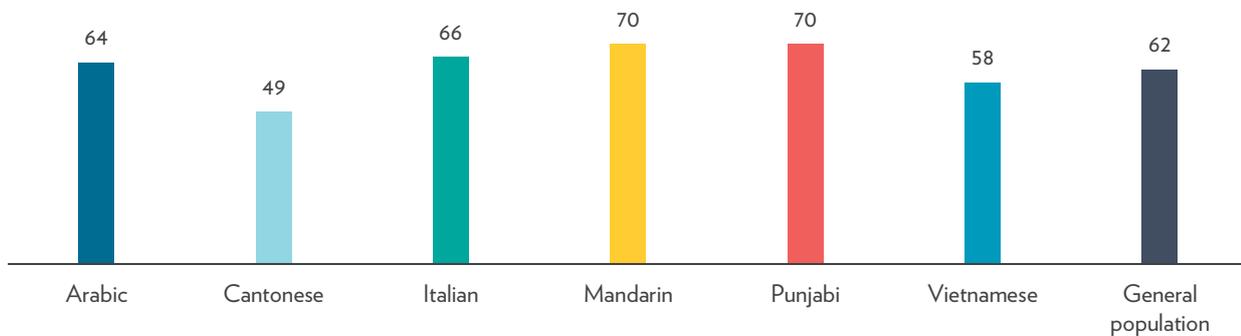
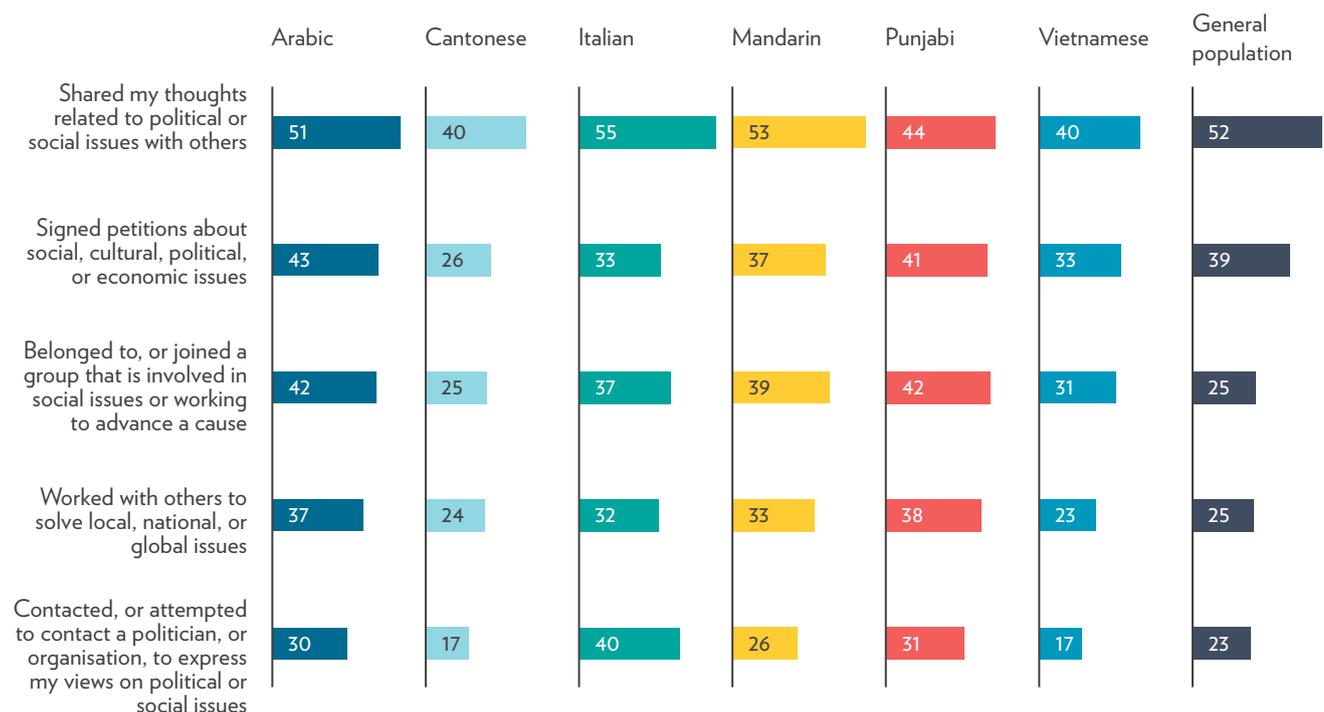


Figure 29 shows the percentage of respondents from each language community engaging in various forms of civic participation. Discussing political or social topics with others is the most common form of engagement among Italian (55%) and Mandarin (53%) speakers. In contrast, Arabic and Punjabi speakers are more likely to engage in collaborative forms of civic participation. Around four in 10 respondents from each language community reported signing a petition (43% and 41% respectively), joining a group working on social issues or causes

(42%), or working with others to address local, national, or international issues (37% and 38% respectively). These patterns suggest a strong orientation towards collective action within these communities. Italian speakers also stood out for their engagement in more formal channels of political expression, with 40% reporting they had contacted a politician or organisation to express their views on social or political matters, which is the highest across all language communities.

FIGURE 29 | Civic participation by multilingual community (%)



“I was born in Australia. It is where my family is and there is nowhere else I belong. I am so fortunate to live in an incredibly diverse and multicultural country where I am able to celebrate my family’s culture and traditions.” (Italian speaker)

“Having connections with other people with shared cultural/ethnic heritage, either through work or some other societal or civic engagement [makes me feel Australian]” (Arabic speaker)

“High school was a big part of my life and made me feel like I belonged. In my area there was a lot of cultural diversity so I never felt I wasn’t Australian...” (Vietnamese speaker)

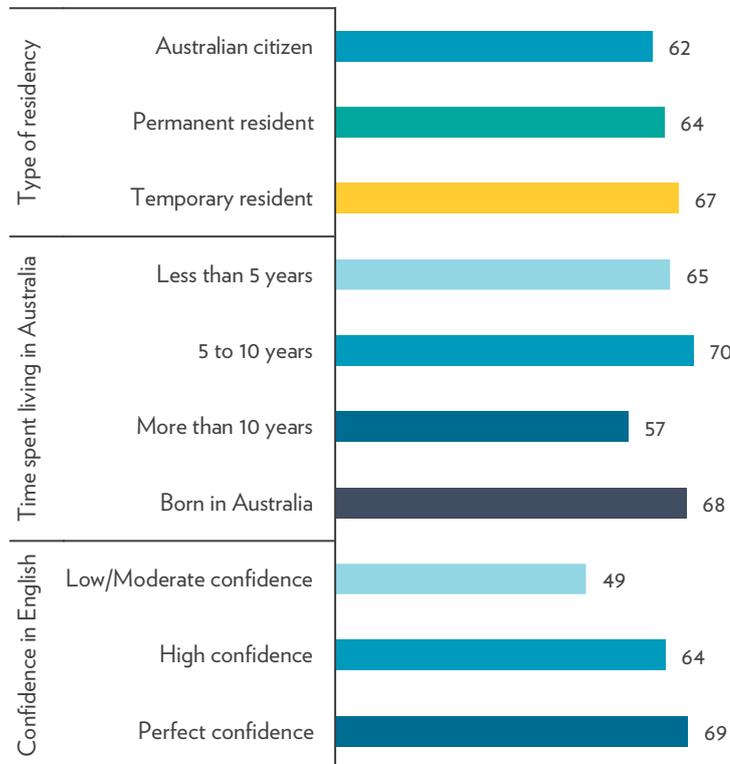
Civic participation and type of residency

Temporary visa holders are slightly more likely to engage in civic activities (67%) compared to Australian citizens (62%) and permanent residents (64%). Those who have lived in Australia for over 10 years (57%) are notably less active in civic participation than recent migrants (65% for those in Australia less than five years; 70% for those in Australia for 5–10 years) and Australian-born individuals (68%) (Figure 30). This pattern is related to age. Younger respondents are significantly more likely to participate in civic activities, with 74% of those aged 18–25 engaging in at least

one activity, followed by 71% of those aged 26–40, 61% of those aged 41–55, and 50% of respondents aged 55+.

Confidence in English significantly influences civic participation among multilingual audiences. Most respondents with perfect confidence in English reported participating in at least one civic activity (69%), while only 49% of those with low/moderate confidence did so.

FIGURE 30 | Civic participation by type of residency, time spent living in Australia, and confidence in English among multilingual community (six language communities) (% have engaged in at least one activity)

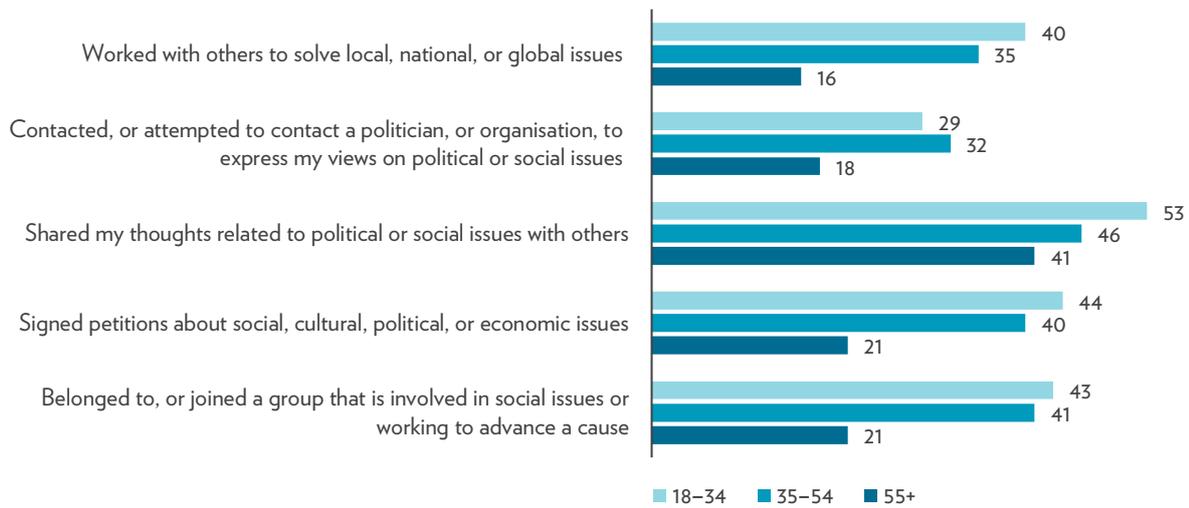


Civic participation by age

Younger multilingual communities are significantly more likely to engage in civic activities than older respondents. This generational pattern is particularly evident in collaborative civic participation, such as working with others, signing petitions, and joining a group involved in social causes. Two in five respondents aged 18–34 (40%) report working with others to address local,

national or global issues, compared to 35% of those aged 35–54 and only 16% of those aged 55+. Similarly, 40–44% of respondents aged 18–54 say they have signed a petition or joined a group to advance a cause — more than double the proportion of those aged 55+ (21%) (Figure 31).

FIGURE 31 | Civic participation by age (six language communities) (%)

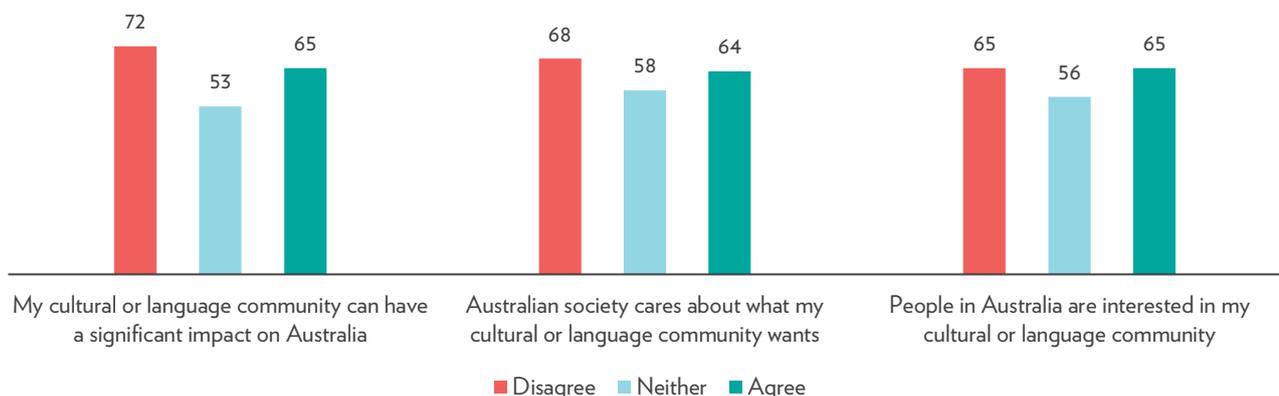


Civic participation and collective efficacy

We found a nuanced relationship between collective efficacy and civic participation among language communities. Figure 32 shows that 72% of respondents who disagree that their cultural or language community can significantly impact Australia have engaged in civic activities — higher than 65% of those who agree and 53% of those who are neutral. Similarly, 68% of those who agree that Australian society cares about their community’s

needs reported civic engagement, compared to 64% of those who disagree and 58% of those who are neutral. Overall, individuals who either agree or disagree with statements about collective efficacy are more likely to engage in civic activities than those who neither agree nor disagree, indicating that stronger opinions are linked to higher levels of civic participation.

FIGURE 32 | Civic participation and collective efficacy among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (% have engaged in at least one activity)



Civic participation and media representation

Both those who feel their cultural or language community is fairly and sufficiently represented in Australian media and those who

do not are more likely to engage in at least one civic activity, compared to those who neither agree nor disagree (Figure 33).

FIGURE 33 | Civic participation among multilingual community by media representation (six language communities) (% have engaged in at least one activity)

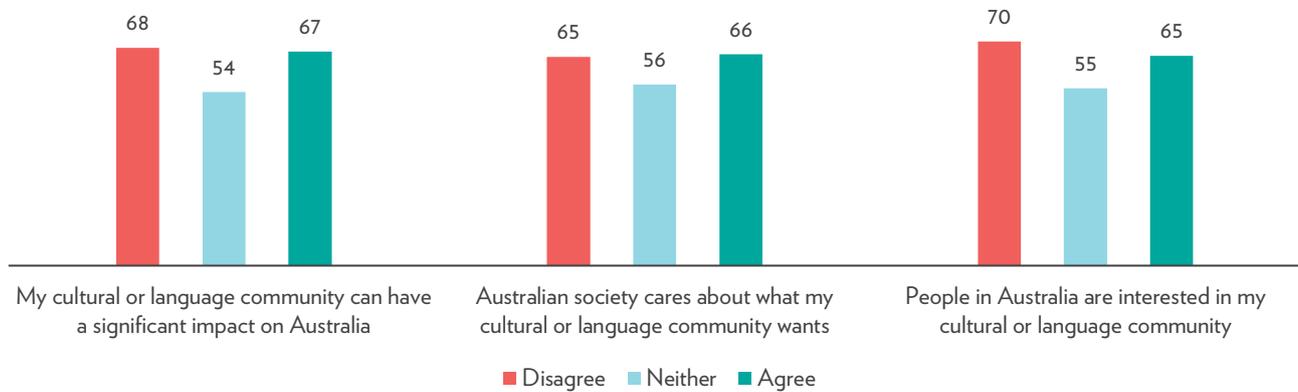
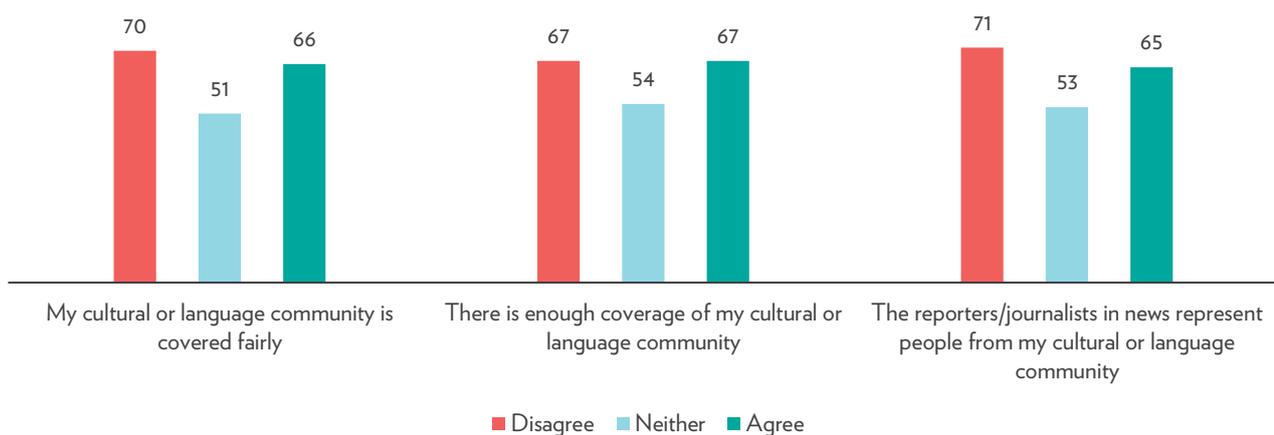


Figure 34 shows a relationship between perceptions of news representation and civic participation among multilingual respondents. Both those who feel their cultural or language community is fairly represented in the news and those who do not are much more likely to report having engaged in at least one civic activity (70% and 66% respectively), compared to those who neither agree nor disagree (51%). Similarly, respondents who either agree or disagree that there is enough coverage

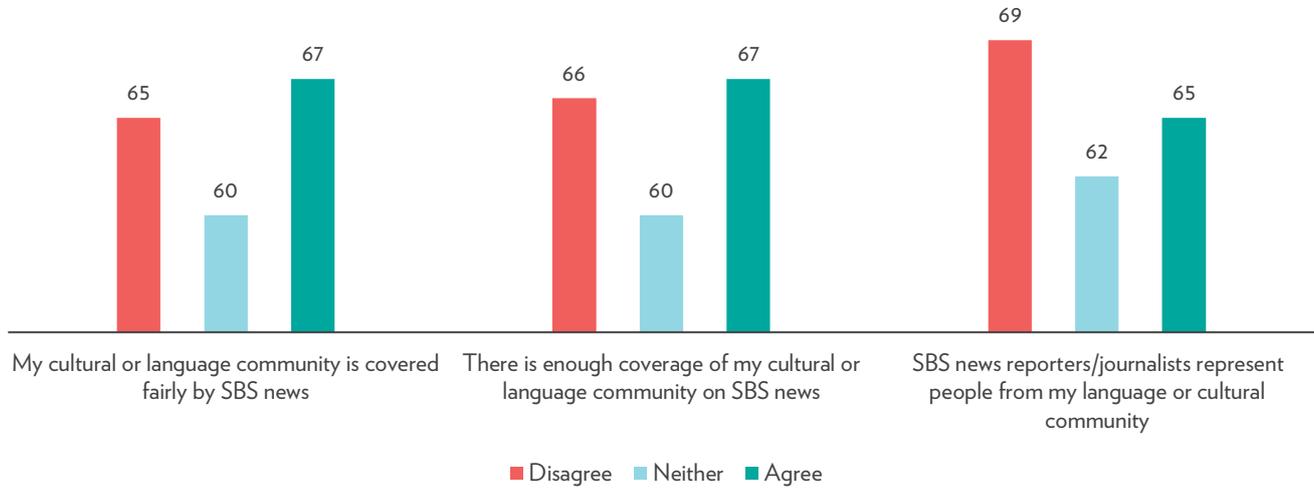
of their community are much more likely to engage civically (both 67%), whereas those who feel neutral indicate lower levels of engagement (54%). Notably, the highest level of civic participation (71%) is among those who disagree that reporters or journalists represent people from their community, compared to 65% among those who agree and only 53% among those who feel neutral.

FIGURE 34 | Civic participation among multilingual community by news representation (six language communities) (% have engaged in at least one activity)



Feeling represented in SBS News also has an impact on multilingual audiences' civic participation. However, the differences in civic participation are less pronounced (Figure 35).

FIGURE 35 | Civic participation and SBS News representation (six language communities) (% have engaged in at least one activity)

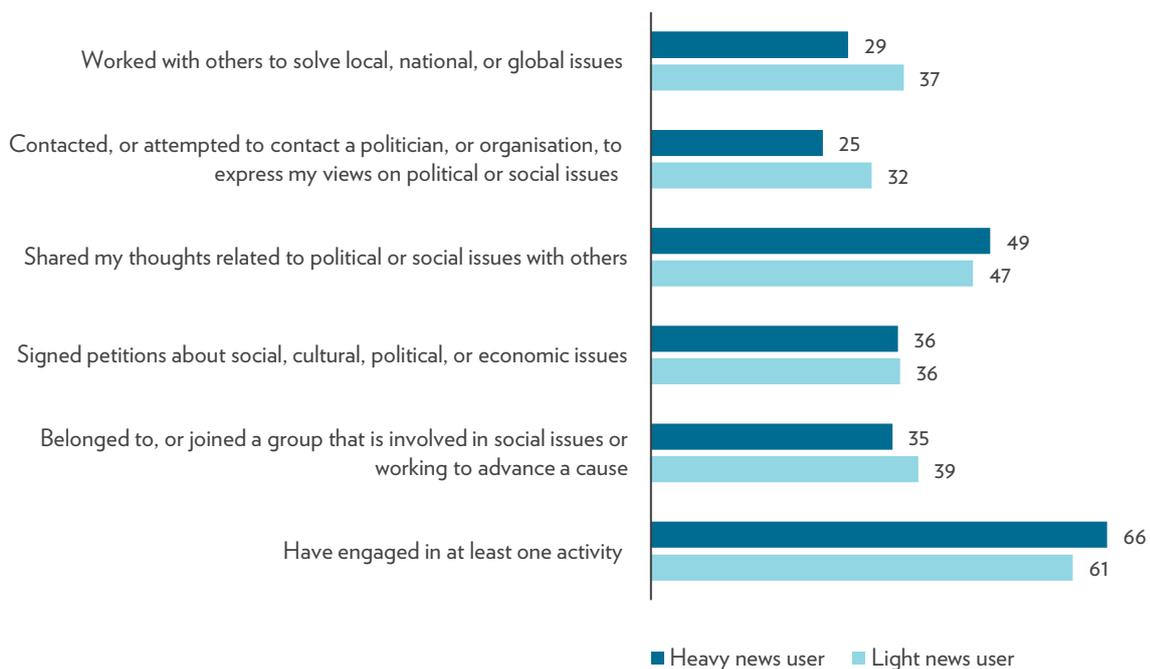


Civic participation and news access

Civic participation is higher among heavy news users, with two-thirds (66%) reporting involvement in at least one activity, compared to 61% of light news users. While heavy news users are slightly more likely to share their views on political or social issues with others (49%), light news users generally show higher

levels of participation in civic activities. For instance, over one-third (37%) of light news users reported working with others to address local, national, or global issues, and 32% had contacted a politician or organisation to express their views, compared to only 29% and 25% of heavy news users respectively (Figure 36).

FIGURE 36 | Civic participation among multilingual audiences by news access (six language communities) (%)



SUMMARY

More than two-thirds (69%) of multilingual communities feel their cultural or language community can have an impact on Australia, indicating high levels of collective efficacy. However, fewer people think the society cares about their community. This is heightened among younger audiences. The sense of collective agency varies across language communities and is shaped by factors such as English confidence, length of settlement, and age. Collective efficacy is also higher among those who feel they are adequately and fairly represented in the news. Similarly, younger respondents and those with higher language confidence tend to be more civically engaged, particularly in collaborative activities. Media representation plays a key role, with those who feel fairly and sufficiently represented indicating a stronger sense of collective efficacy.



REPRESENTATION IN AUSTRALIAN MEDIA

OVERVIEW

Media includes all platforms and channels that are available and can be consumed in Australia. The Australian media creates a cultural landscape in which Australians situate and identify themselves.

Understanding the variance in how different communities feel represented in the Australian media is critical to media owners, policy makers, content creators, and others who represent the voices of Australians, so they can understand who is not being represented and where changes need to occur.

It is also important to ensure that community voices are heard, so that we understand what audiences want more of in the media.

We examined how audiences feel about how their cultural or language community are reflected in the media. We examined three aspects of representation: volume of coverage, fairness of coverage, and how well media talents represent people from their cultural/language communities.

"I see some journalists and TV presenters with Italian surnames so that makes me feel represented in the media. SBS also have several Italian shows/movies which are inclusive of my culture."
(Italian speaker)



SBS Italian representing at Norton Street Italian Festa in Leichhardt, Sydney.

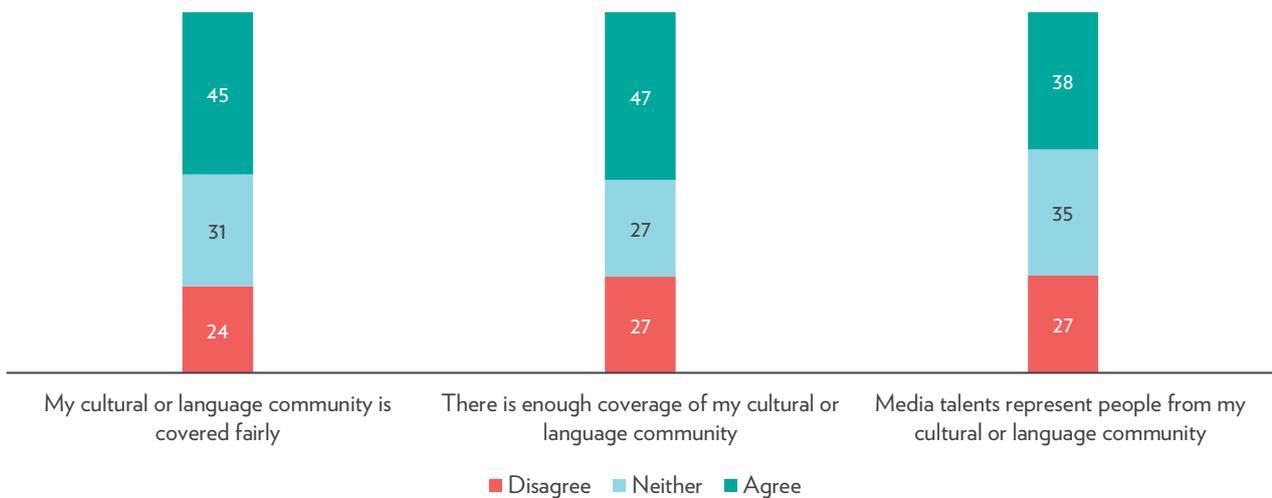
FINDINGS

Representation in Australian media

Among multilingual respondents, 45% say the Australian media covers their cultural or language community fairly, while 47% say there is enough coverage of their cultural or language community (Figure 37).

Only 38% agree that media talent is representative of their communities.

FIGURE 37 | Representation in Australian media among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (%)



‘I feel that the news media in Australia fairly represents the Asian community, especially with the increasing presence of Asian journalists across major platforms, newspapers, and news outlets. Their perspectives bring a more authentic and diverse representation of our culture and experiences. This visibility helps challenge stereotypes and provides a more balanced view of our community’s contributions, struggles, and successes. However, while the representation has improved, there are still instances where certain narratives might focus too much on negative aspects, but overall, the media is becoming more inclusive and reflective of the multicultural society.’ (Cantonese speaker)

“The news media can sometimes fairly represent cultural or language communities by showcasing their achievements, stories, and perspectives. However, it can also be unfair by focusing on stereotypes or negative events, which can lead to misunderstandings.” (Italian speaker)

Representation in Australian media and the nuances among multilingual audiences

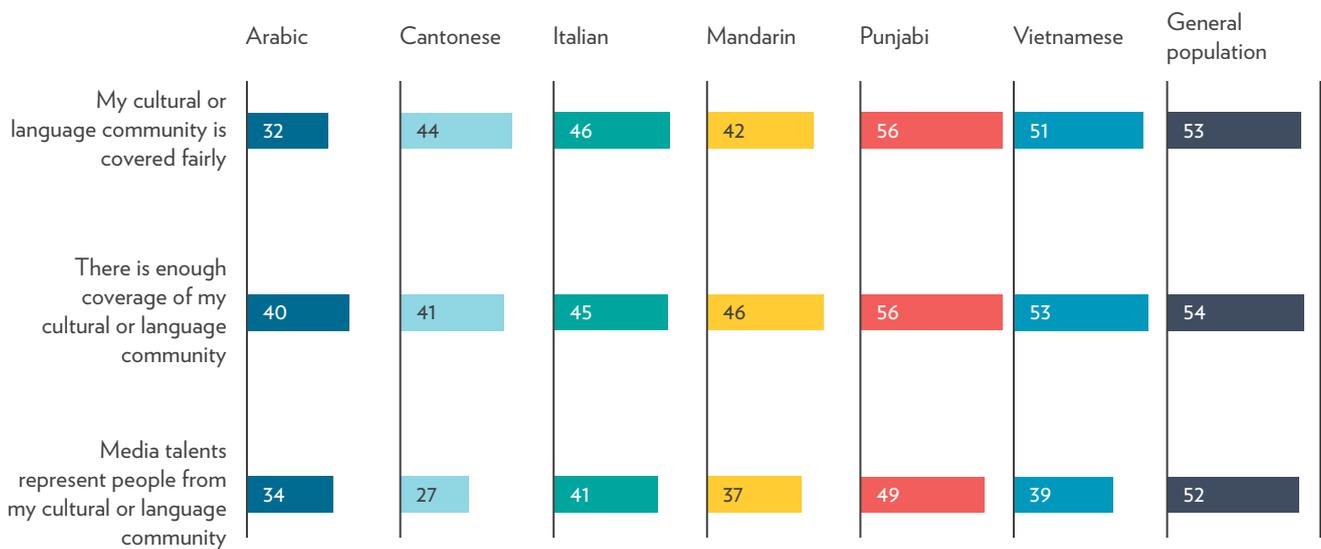
Perception of the amount and fairness of representation in Australian media varies by language community. Punjabi speakers were the most likely to feel represented by media overall, followed by Vietnamese speakers (Figure 38).

More than half of the Punjabi speakers in the study (56%) felt that their community was covered fairly in Australian media and that there was enough coverage. Of Vietnamese speakers, 51% felt there was fair coverage and 53% felt there was enough coverage of their community. Punjabi and Vietnamese

speakers felt there were similar levels of representation of their communities compared to the general population. Almost half of Punjabi speakers (49%) saw themselves represented by media talent, but this was lower for Vietnamese speakers (39%).

Arabic speakers felt the least represented — only 32% felt there was fair coverage of their community and 40% felt there was enough coverage. Cantonese speakers felt the least represented by media talent (27%) compared to other language speakers.

FIGURE 38 | Representation in Australian media by multilingual community (% agree)

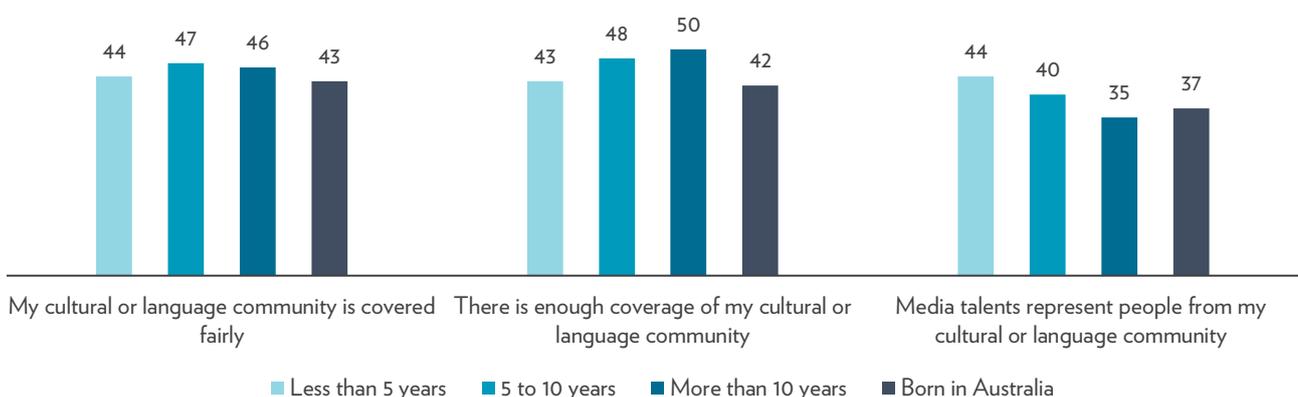


Representation in Australian media and time spent living in Australia

Time spent living in Australia has little impact on feeling represented by Australian media overall. However, for

representation by media talent, multilingual respondents felt less represented the longer they lived in Australia (Figure 39).

FIGURE 39 | Representation in Australian media by length of time in Australia (six language communities) (% agree)

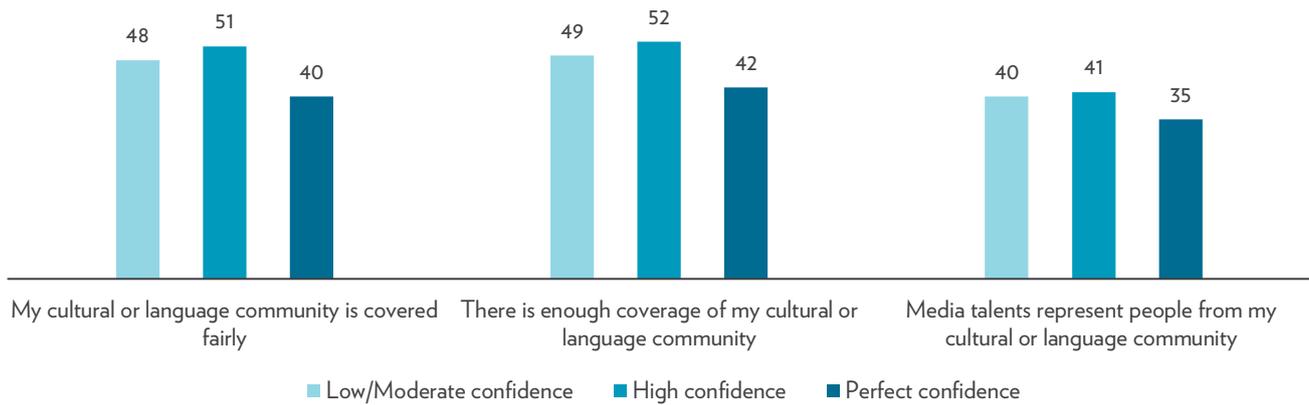


Representation in Australian media and confidence in English

Multilingual audiences with perfect confidence in English are less likely to feel fairly represented in Australian media. Only 40% of respondents with perfect confidence in English believed that their cultural/language community was covered fairly, compared to 48% of those with low/moderate confidence in English and 51% of those with high confidence in English. There was a similar trend for coverage of cultural/language and representation of media talent.

It is possible that, as confidence in English rises, so too do expectations for what representation in media looks like. As such, higher rates of English confidence mean holding media organisations, and the content they present, to higher standards for representation (Figure 40).

FIGURE 40 | Representation in general media by confidence in English (six language communities) (% agree)

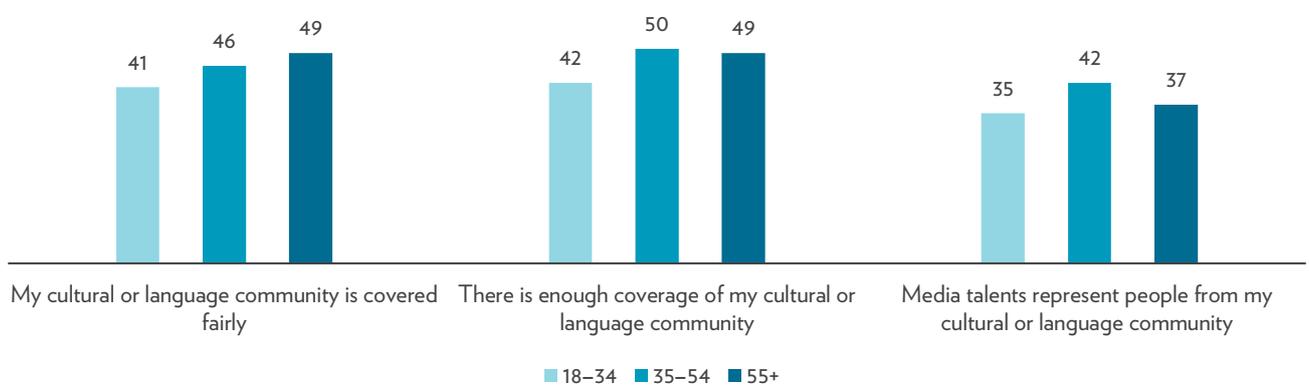


Representation in Australian media by age

Younger multilingual Australians felt less represented in Australian media compared to older audiences. Only 41% of respondents aged 18–34 said their cultural/language community is covered fairly and only 42% thought there was enough

coverage. These figures are significantly higher among those aged 35 and over. In relation to believing that media talent represents them, the trend is less clear (Figure 41).

FIGURE 41 | Representation in Australian media by age (six language communities) (% agree)



SUMMARY

Less than half of multilingual audiences feel their cultural or language community is fairly and sufficiently represented in Australian media. Arabic, Mandarin and Cantonese language speakers are least likely to feel they are adequately represented. Time spent living in Australia does not have a consistent correlation with perceptions of media representation, but those who have lived in Australia for more than 10 years are most likely to say there is enough coverage. Younger multilingual respondents feel less represented in media than older respondents

NEWS REPRESENTATION

OVERVIEW

Perceptions of fair and adequate representation in the news are strongly related to audience trust. Trust in news is an essential element of community attachment and social cohesion and a lack of trust may lead to disengagement among those who believe they are not adequately represented. Conversely, those who believe they are adequately and fairly represented in the news are more likely to have the confidence to participate in the community, and can build a sense of belonging.

We examined how audiences feel about news representation in relation to their cultural or language community. Specifically, we focused on three aspects of representation: volume of coverage, fairness of coverage, and how well reporters/journalists represent people from cultural/language communities.



SBS Arabic broadcasting from Toowoomba.

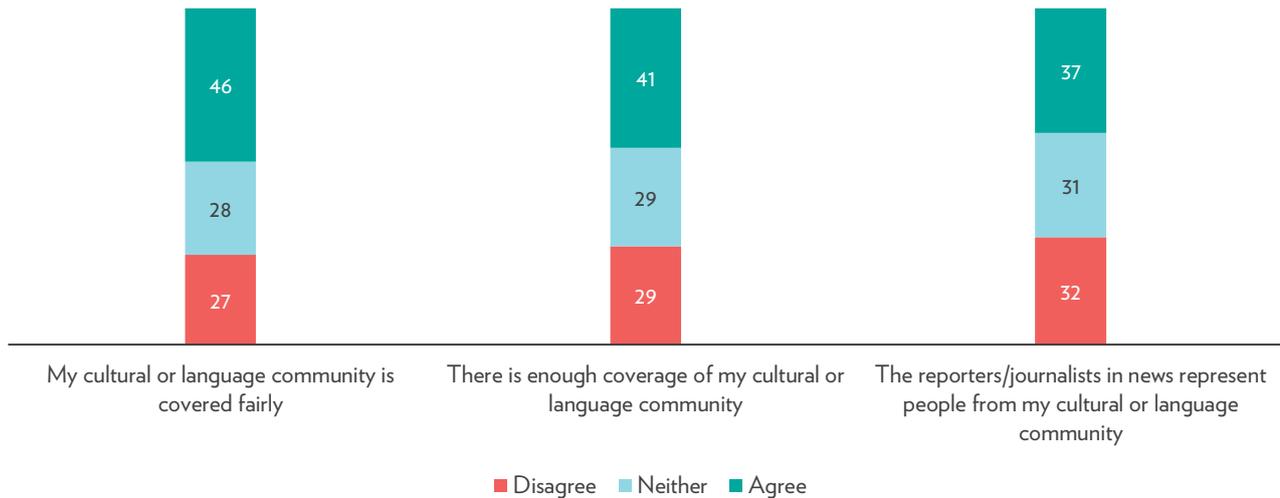
FINDINGS

Representation in Australian news in general

Less than 50% of multilingual audiences agreed that their cultural or language community is covered fairly by general Australian news. Approximately 41% felt there was enough coverage, and

only 37% agreed that the reporters/journalists who present or report the news represent people from their cultural or language community (Figure 42).

FIGURE 42 | Representation in Australian news in general among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (%)



Representation in Australian news in general and the nuances among multilingual audiences

Of all six language communities in this study, Punjabi speakers are the most likely to agree that their community is covered fairly in general Australian news (57%) (Figure 43). In contrast, Arabic speakers were the least likely to feel their community was covered fairly (32%), with one Arabic-speaking respondent claiming:

“...there have been numerous instances where the media, especially Seven and Nine news, represent my cultural community in a negative light. They fail to highlight the injustices that my community has faced these last 14 months and has been a huge let down for us.” (Arabic speaker).

Vietnamese speakers were the most likely to agree that their community receives enough coverage in general Australian news (51%), while Cantonese speakers were the least likely to agree (30%).

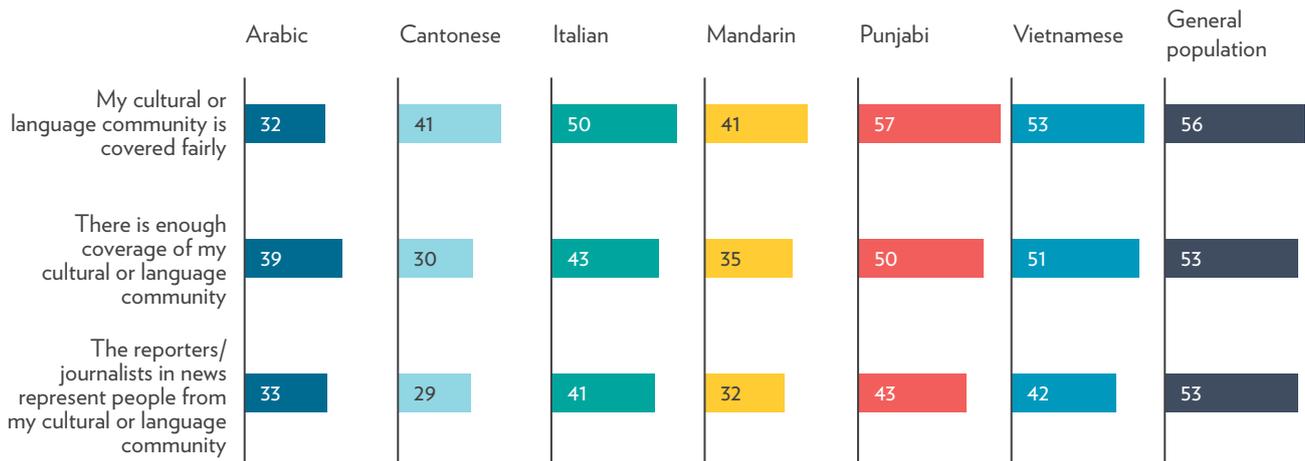
Punjabi speakers were the most likely to agree that reporters/journalists in general Australian news are representative of

their community (43%), while Cantonese speakers were the least likely to agree. Mandarin speakers also felt lower levels of representation overall:

“The news media can sometimes unfairly represent certain cultural or language communities by focusing on negative stereotypes or showing only one side of their story. This can create misconceptions. Fair representation means showing a community’s full diversity, including both challenges and positive contributions, without generalising or misrepresenting it.” (Mandarin speaker)

The general population sample was more likely to agree that they were covered fairly (56% vs 46%) and sufficiently (53% vs 41%) by the news. General population respondents felt that reporters/journalists were more likely to represent them (53% vs 37%) when compared to respondents from most language communities.

FIGURE 43 | Representation in Australian news in general by multilingual community (% agree)



“The news media fairly and positively represents my cultural/ language community. SBS has programs in my language and gives news from India in my language. It represents my community and gives genuine news about what happens in India and here (in Australia). There are also radio programs here (in Australia) started by my community for us to share ideas with each other about how to live in Australia and how to be a good citizen of Australia so it is in a positive way that things are described in my media.” (Punjabi speaker)

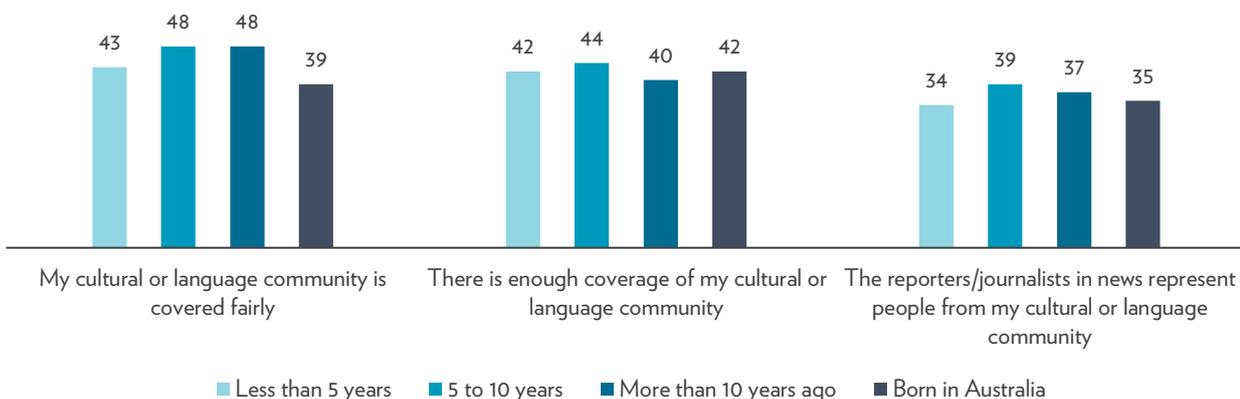
“I feel the media does a reasonable job of representing my cultural community in general. Some channels like SBS are better at this.” (Cantonese speaker)

Representation in Australian news in general and time spent living in Australia

Those who had lived in Australia for 5–10 years or more than 10 years were more likely to agree that their community is covered fairly by general Australian news (48%) (Figure 44) compared to those who had lived in Australia for less than five years (43%) or those born in Australia (39%). These respondents were also

more likely to say that reporters/journalists in general Australian news are representative of their communities (5–10 years, 39%; more than 10 years 37%) compared to those who were born in Australia (35%) or those who had spent less than five years in Australia (34%).

FIGURE 44 | Representation in Australian news in general by time spent living in Australia (six language communities) (% agree)



Representation in Australian news in general and confidence in English

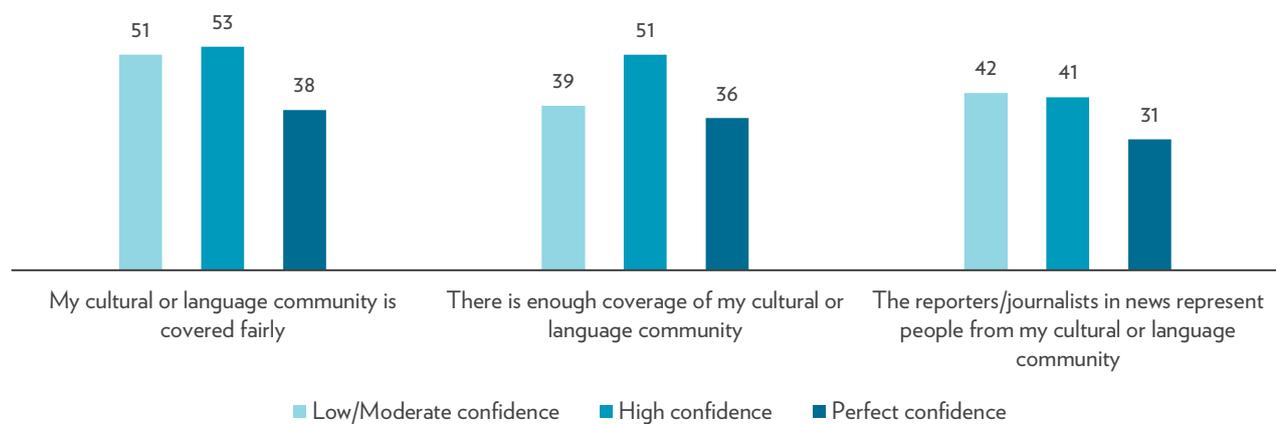
Confidence in English is an important factor informing how represented respondents feel in general Australian news coverage. Those with high confidence in English were the most likely to agree that their community was covered fairly in Australian news (53%), closely followed by those with low/moderate confidence (51%) (Figure 45). In contrast, those with perfect confidence in English were the least likely to agree that their community was covered fairly (38%).

A similar pattern emerged among respondents in relation to the belief that reporters/journalists are representative of their community. Those with high confidence in English (41%) and

those with low/moderate confidence (42%) were the most likely to agree that reporters/journalists are representative of their community, while those with perfect confidence were the least likely to agree (31%).

However, audiences with low/moderate confidence in English were less likely to agree (39%) that there was enough coverage of their community relative to those with high confidence (51%), while audiences with perfect confidence in English were the least likely to agree (36%).

FIGURE 45 | Representation in Australian news in general by confidence in English (six language communities) (% agree)

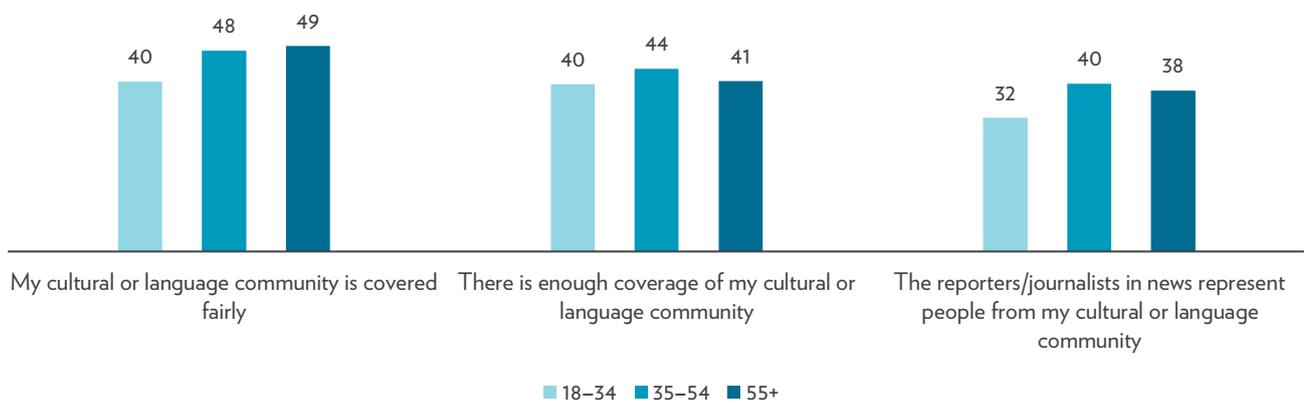


Representation in Australian news in general by age

Age impacted how respondents felt about their representation in general Australian news. Younger multilingual audiences were less likely to agree that their community is covered fairly in general Australian news (40%) compared to those aged 35–54 (48%) and those 55+ (49%). Similarly, those aged 18–34 were

less likely to agree that reporters/journalists are representative of their community (32%) compared to those aged 35–54 (40%) and those 55+ (38%) (Figure 46).

FIGURE 46 | Representation in Australian news in general by age (six language communities) (% agree)



News representation and news consumption

The data shows a strong relationship between the level of news engagement in language with how represented respondents felt in news, whether general Australian news or SBS News.

Respondents who engaged with 10% or more of their news in language were much more likely to feel that their community was covered fairly, that it had enough coverage, and that reporters/journalists were representative of their community, compared to

those who engaged with less than 10% of their news in language (Figures 47 and 48).

This indicates a cut-off point of 10% for minimal engagement with news in language for multilingual audiences to feel more represented in news.

FIGURE 47 | General news representation by in-language news consumption (six language communities) (% agree)

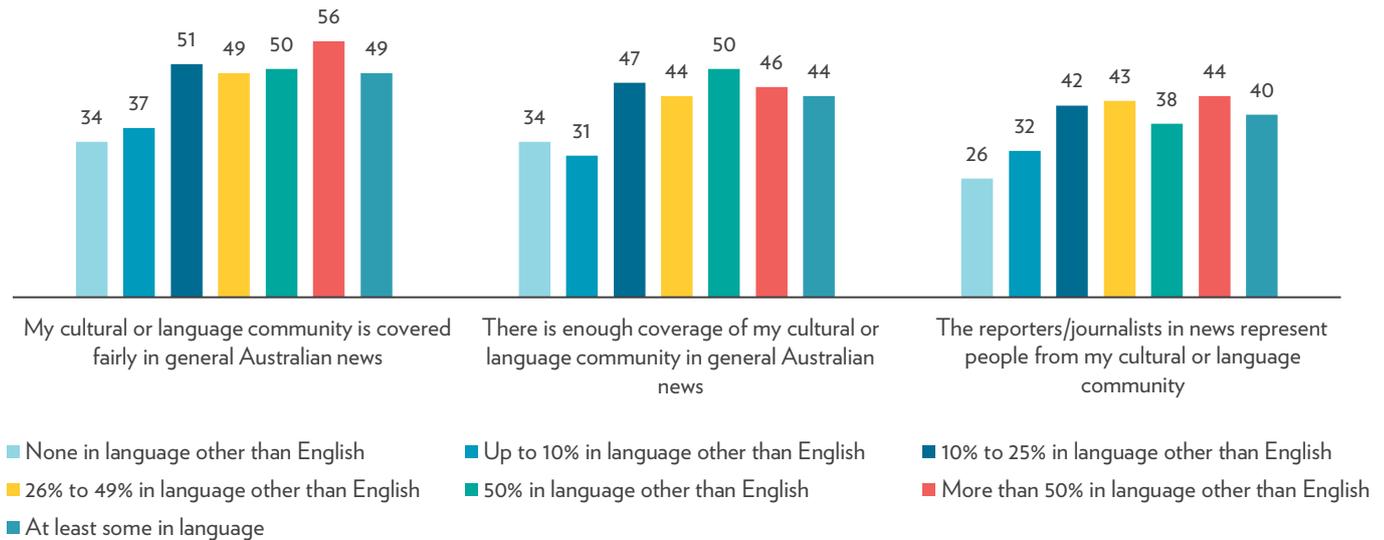
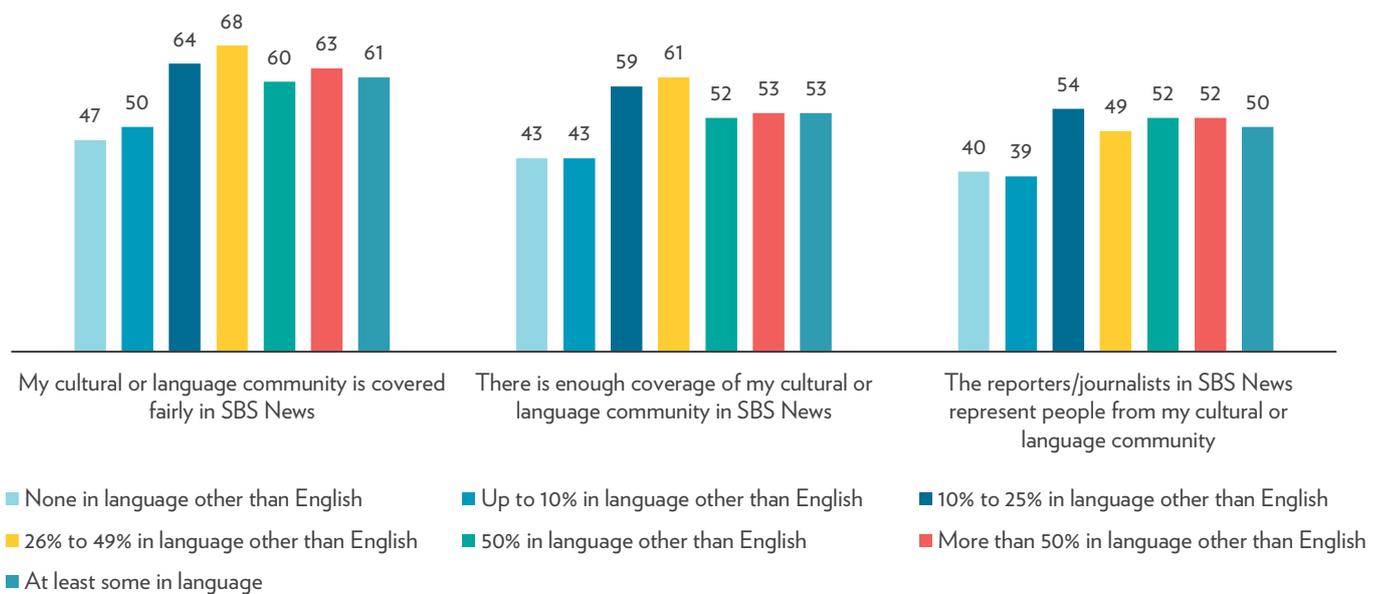


FIGURE 48 | SBS News representation by in-language news consumption (six language communities) (% agree)



Comparing the longitudinal results of the five language communities (Arabic, Cantonese, Italian, Mandarin, and Vietnamese) since Wave 1, those who had spent less than five years in Australia showed a downward trend in their feeling of being represented in general Australian news (Figure 49).

Since Wave 1, Arabic communities feel significantly less represented in general Australian news (Figure 50), while Cantonese speakers feel more represented.

FIGURE 49 | Representation in general Australian news and five language communities (excluding Punjabi) by length of time living in Australia: Wave 1 vs. Wave 2 (% agree)

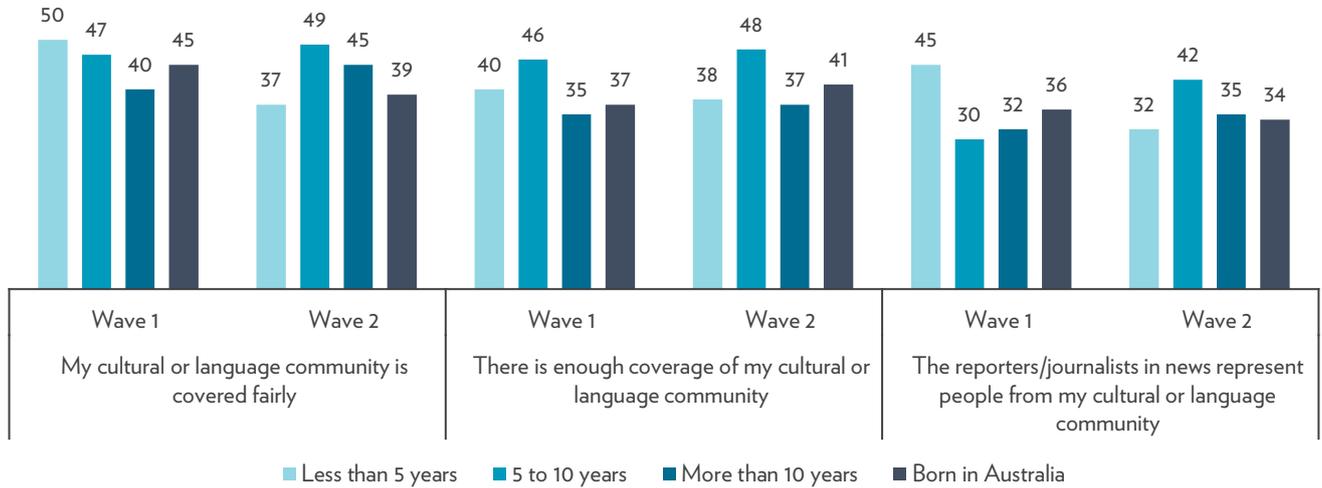
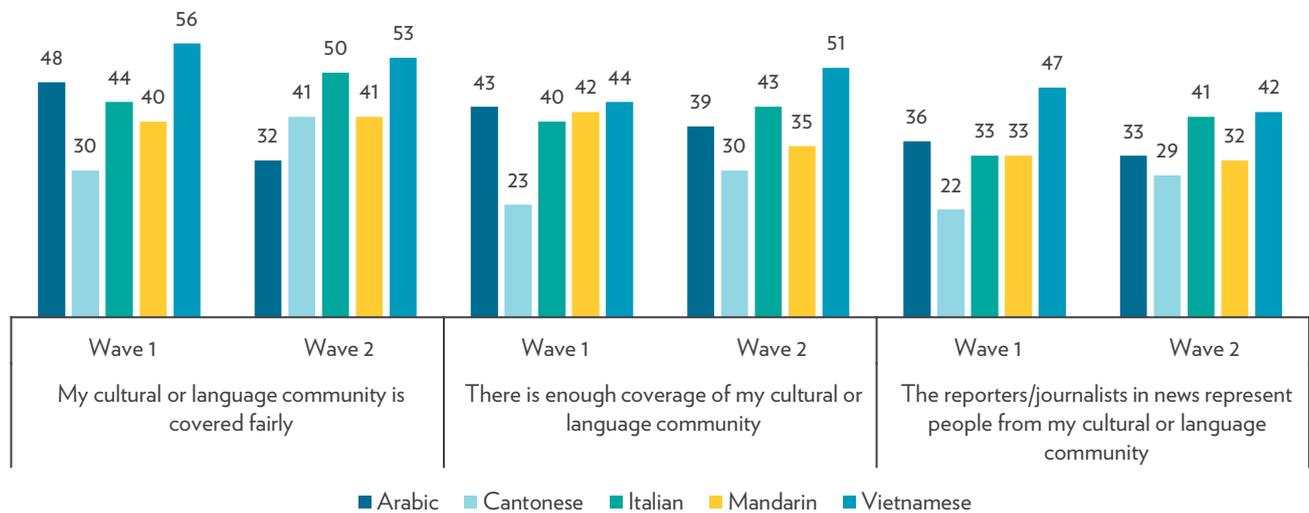


FIGURE 50 | Representation in general Australian news by language community (excluding Punjabi): Wave 1 vs. Wave 2 (% agree)



Representation in SBS News

SBS is a long-established multicultural broadcaster in Australia, and in June 2025 celebrated its 50th year. SBS’s core purpose is to provide multilingual and multicultural broadcasting and digital media services that inform, educate, and entertain all Australians, reflecting Australia’s multicultural society.⁷ Broadcasting in over 60 languages other than English, SBS reaches multicultural Australians at scale. As one of the most trusted news brands in Australia⁸, SBS seeks to strengthen social cohesion.

In this study, SBS News is defined broadly to include both news in English and in language, which could be SBS World News and in-language news programs, across all media platforms. This definition is open to interpretation by respondents.

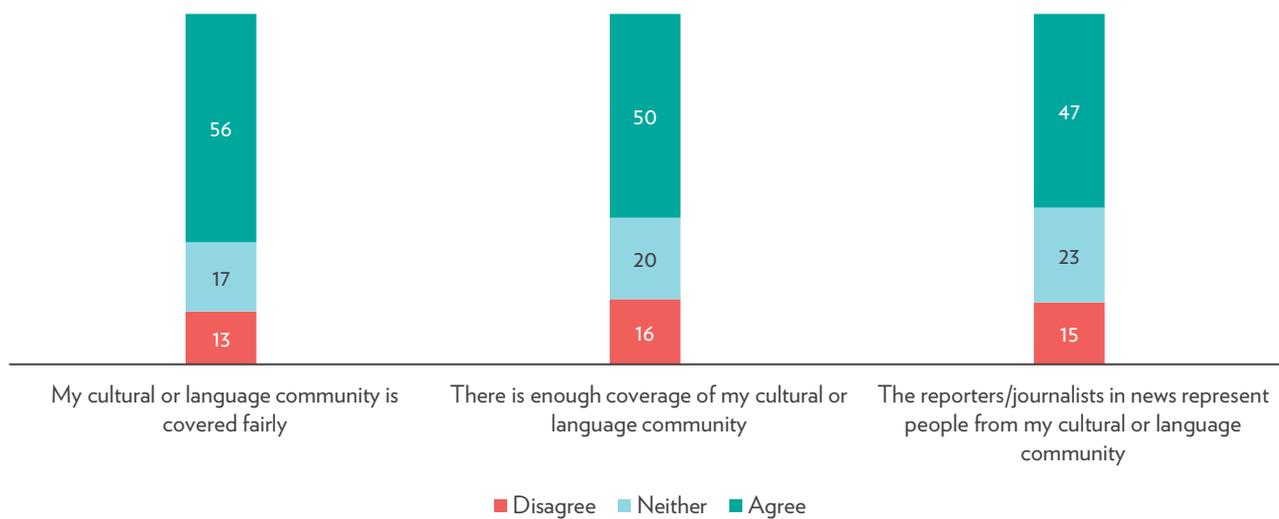
A total of 56% of multilingual audiences agreed that their cultural or language community is covered fairly by SBS News (Figure 51). Half of multilingual audiences agreed that SBS

News provides enough coverage of their cultural or language community, while 47% agreed that SBS News reporters/ journalists represent people from their cultural or language community.

Overall, each of these facets of representation saw higher rates of agreement from multilingual audiences when considering SBS News compared to general Australian news (Figures 51 and 52).

“The Australian media doesn’t talk much about Indian culture news but can find a fair share on SBS.” (Punjabi speaker)

FIGURE 51 | Representation in SBS News among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (%)



“Because of the differences in national conditions and cultures, news media such as SBS generally report from a neutral perspective and in accordance with the facts. This is fair.” (Mandarin speaker)

“Yes. Vietnamese community is being covered fairly. Journalists of SBS provide timely news.” (Vietnamese speaker)

⁷ SBS Charter

⁸ Park, S., Fisher, C., McGuinness, K., Lee, J., Fujita, M., Haw, A., McCallum, K. & Nardi, G. (2025). *Digital News Report: Australia 2025*. Canberra: News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra.

Representation in SBS News and the nuances among multilingual audiences

Of all six language communities in this study, Vietnamese speakers were the most likely to agree that their community is covered fairly in SBS News (64%) (Figure 52). In contrast, Cantonese speakers were the least likely to feel their community was covered fairly (49%).

Vietnamese speakers were the most likely to agree that their community receives enough coverage in SBS News (54%), while Cantonese speakers were the least likely to agree (44%).

Both Italian and Vietnamese speakers were the most likely to agree that SBS News reporters/journalists were representative of

their community (52%), while Mandarin speakers were the least likely to agree (39%).

All language groups showed a high rate of feeling represented in SBS News across all three elements when compared to general Australian news. However, the general population reported a lower level of feeling represented in SBS News compared to general Australian news.

FIGURE 52 | Representation in SBS News by multilingual community (% agree)

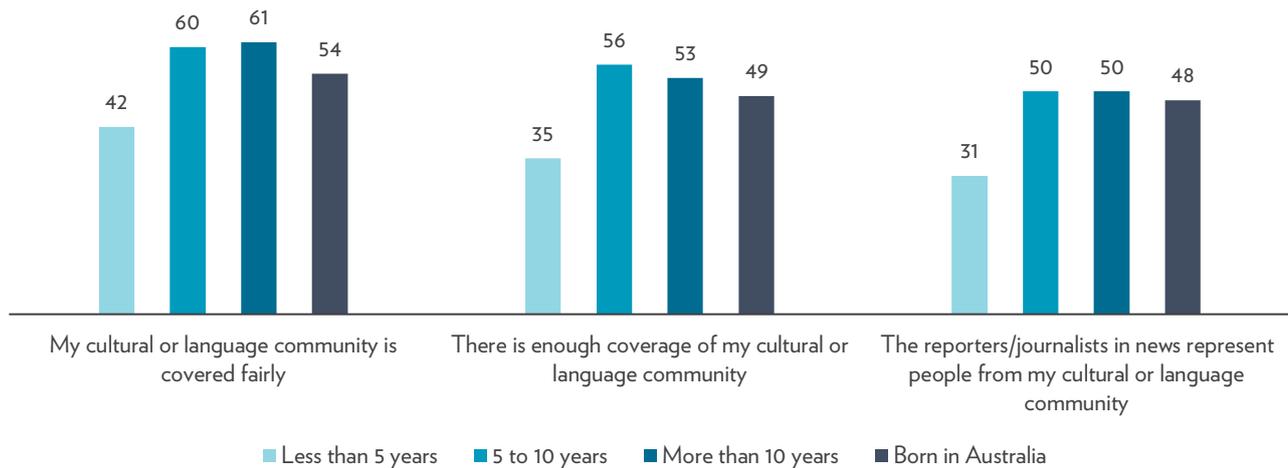


Representation in SBS News and length of time living in Australia

Agreement that SBS News is representative of their community was higher for those who had lived in Australia for 5–10 years (60%) or more than 10 years (61%) compared to those who had lived in Australia for less than five years (42%) or those born in Australia (54%) (Figure 53). All those who were born in Australia or had lived in Australia for more than five years reported similar rates of agreement that SBS News reporters/journalists are representative of their community (between 48%–50%), while

those with less than five years in Australia had a lower rate of agreement (31%). Those who had lived in Australia for less than five years were also significantly less likely to agree there was enough coverage of their community on SBS News (35%) when compared to those with more than five years in Australia (5–10 years, 56%; more than 10 years, 53%) or those born in Australia (49%).

FIGURE 53 | Representation in SBS News by length of time living in Australia (six language communities) (% agree)



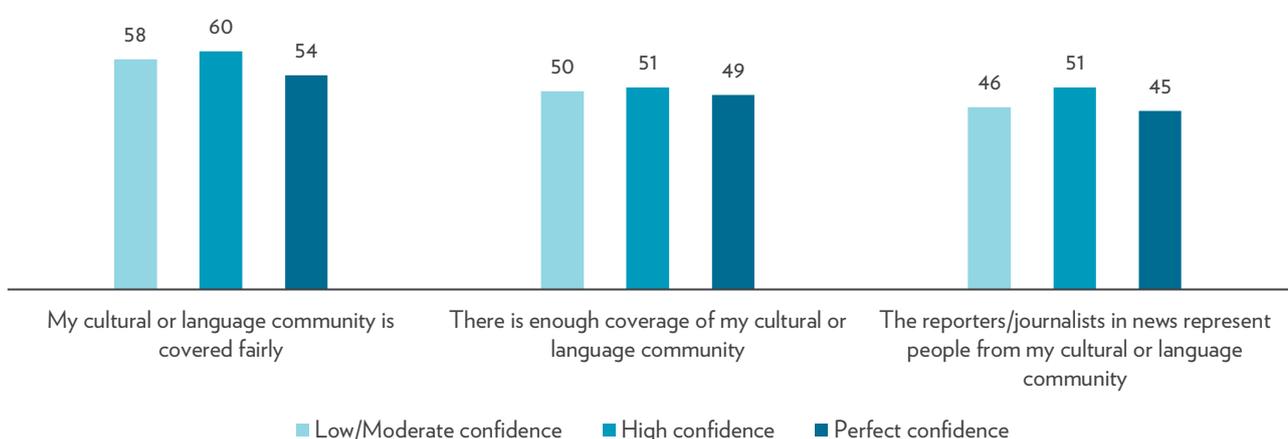
Representation in SBS News and confidence in English

Those with high confidence in English were the most likely to agree that their community is covered fairly (60%), followed closely by audiences with low/moderate confidence in English (58%) (Figure 54). In contrast, those with perfect confidence in English were the least likely to agree their community is covered fairly (54%).

However, in relation to belief in enough coverage of community, results were consistent across levels of English confidence (49%–51%).

Those with high confidence in English were the most likely to agree (51%) that SBS News reporters/journalists are representative of their community, while those with low/moderate confidence (46%) and perfect confidence (45%) in English were the least likely to agree.

FIGURE 54 | Representation in SBS News by confidence in English (six language communities) (% agree)

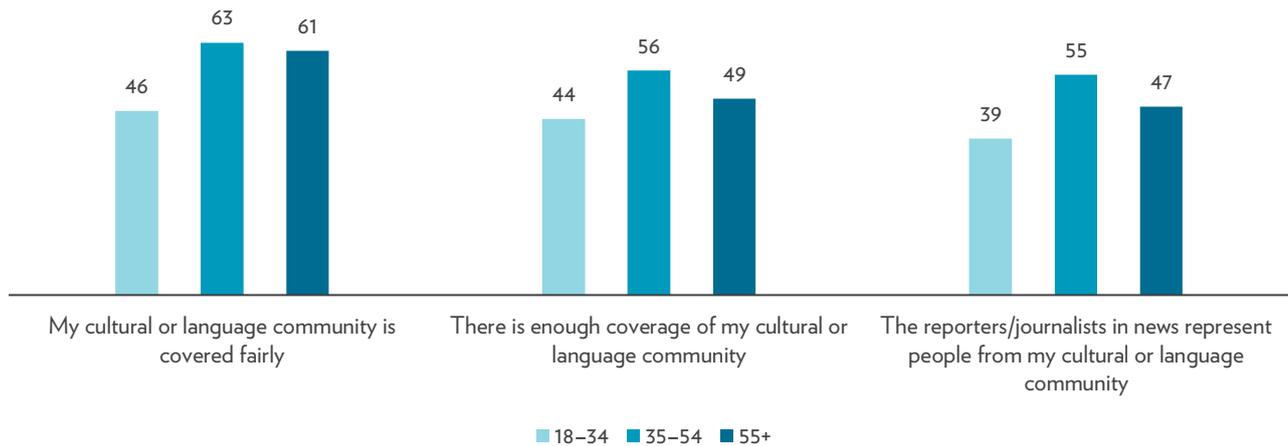


Representation in SBS News by age

Age impacts how respondents feel represented in SBS News. Younger respondents were less likely to agree their community is covered fairly by SBS News (46%) compared to those aged 35–54 (63%) and those 55+ (61%) (Figure 55). Similarly, those aged 18–34 were less likely to agree that SBS News reporters/journalists are representative of their community (39%), compared to those aged 35–54 (55%) and those 55+ (47%).

Belief that there is enough coverage of their community saw the least agreement from those aged 18–34 (44%) and the most agreement from those aged 35–54 (56%).

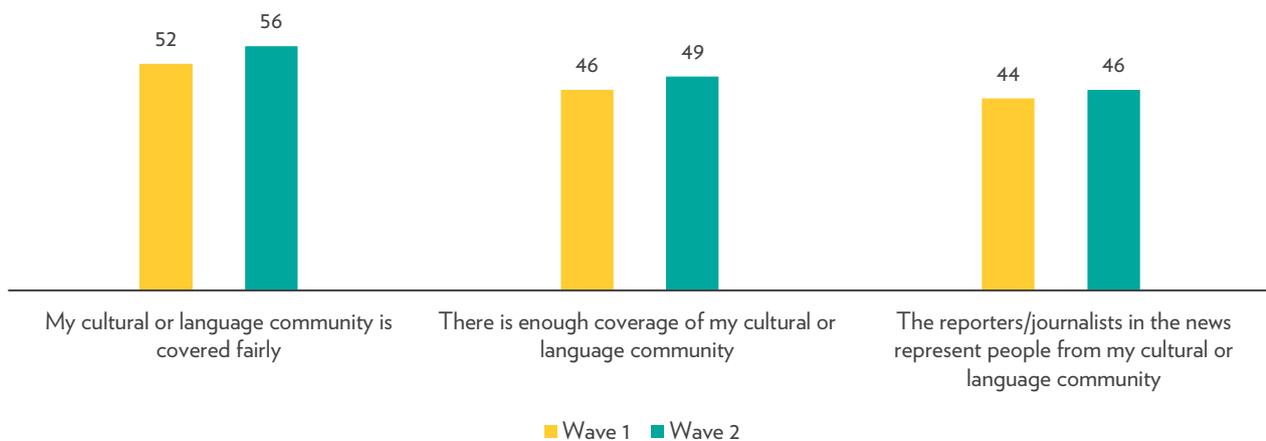
FIGURE 55 | Representation in SBS News by age (six language communities) (% agree)



Comparing the longitudinal results of the five language communities (Arabic, Cantonese, Italian, Mandarin, and Vietnamese) since Wave 1, multilingual audiences' sense of representation in SBS News has improved across fairness of

community coverage, amount of community coverage, and belief that reporters/journalists are representative of their community.

FIGURE 56 | Representation in SBS News by multilingual community: Wave 1 vs. Wave 2 (five language communities) (% agree)



SUMMARY

Multilingual audiences feel less represented in Australian news in general when compared to the general population's sense of representation. However, multilingual audiences feel more represented by SBS News when compared to the general population. Those who have arrived in Australia more recently feel less represented in both general Australian news and SBS News compared to those who have been living in Australia longer. Confidence in English has a strong association with perceptions of representation in the news. Those who have perfect confidence are less likely to feel they are fairly represented compared to those with lower levels of confidence. This possibly is related to the fact that those born in Australia have a lower sense of representation in the news, as well as young audiences. Younger multilingual audiences feel significantly less represented in both news and general Australian media when compared to older multilingual audiences. Compared to Wave 1, those who arrived in Australia in the past five years are much less likely to feel that their cultural or language community is fairly covered in Australian news.

CONTENT NEEDS AND CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN AUSTRALIAN MEDIA

OVERVIEW

Representation of one's culture in the media is an important element that can help people feel they belong to the society. We asked questions about what audiences would prefer to see more of in the media generally. The three areas of investigation were desire to see more content that represents their culture, content available in their preferred language, and seeing talent representing their culture on screen as well as among producers of content.



“There is a Chinese version of SBS so people who do not know English can access this news. So feel like it is fair in a way because of this accessibility.”

(Cantonese speaker)

FINDINGS

Respondents were asked to rank the top three areas they most want to see more of in the media.

Among the different types of representation of culture in media content, more people were interested in getting content available in language (42%). Audiences also want content that accurately represents their cultural or language community (39%)

and content that represents their cultural or language community living in Australia (39%). Fewer respondents wanted content about their culture generally or talent to be reflected in media content (Figure 57).

FIGURE 57 | Content and cultural representation among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (%)



Content needs and cultural representation, and the nuances among multilingual audiences

When it comes to the representation of their cultural and linguistic communities, each community had its own nuanced preferences for what they prefer to see more of in the media.

Arabic speakers wanted to see content that accurately represents their culture (44%) and their community in Australia (41%) (Figure 58).

Content available in Cantonese was by far the most important element for the Cantonese-speaking community (45%), while media talent that represents people from their communities was the least important (25%).

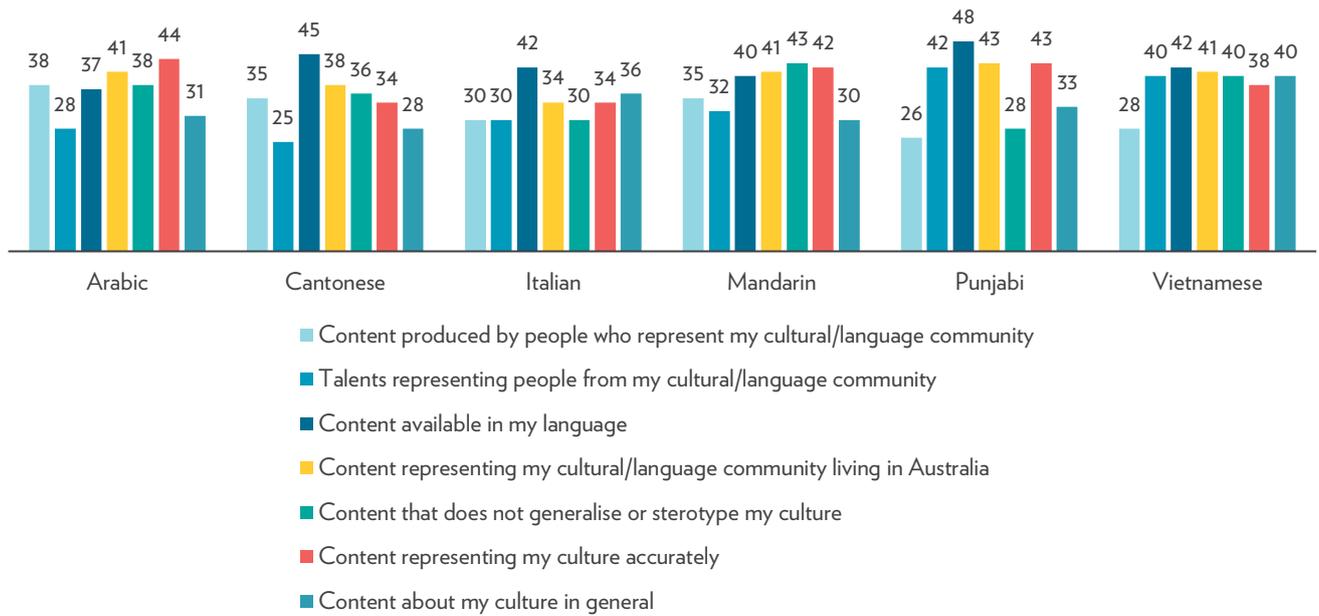
Italian speakers wanted to see more content available in Italian (42%) — a clear standout for that community.

Mandarin speakers wanted to see a focus on content that does not generalise their culture (43%) and content that accurately represents their community and culture (42%).

Content available in Punjabi was also most important for the Punjabi-speaking community (48%). This demonstrates that even a community with very high confidence in English wants to see its language in media. For Punjabi speakers, content produced by people from their community was the least important content need in terms of cultural representation (26%).

Vietnamese speakers ranked almost all options as equally important (38%–42%), with the only exception being content produced by people representative of their cultural/language community, which ranked as least important, at 28%.

FIGURE 58 | Content needs and cultural representation by multilingual community (%)



Content needs and cultural representation, and time spent living in Australia

Time spent living in Australia had an impact on what multilingual audiences want more of in their media (Figure 59).

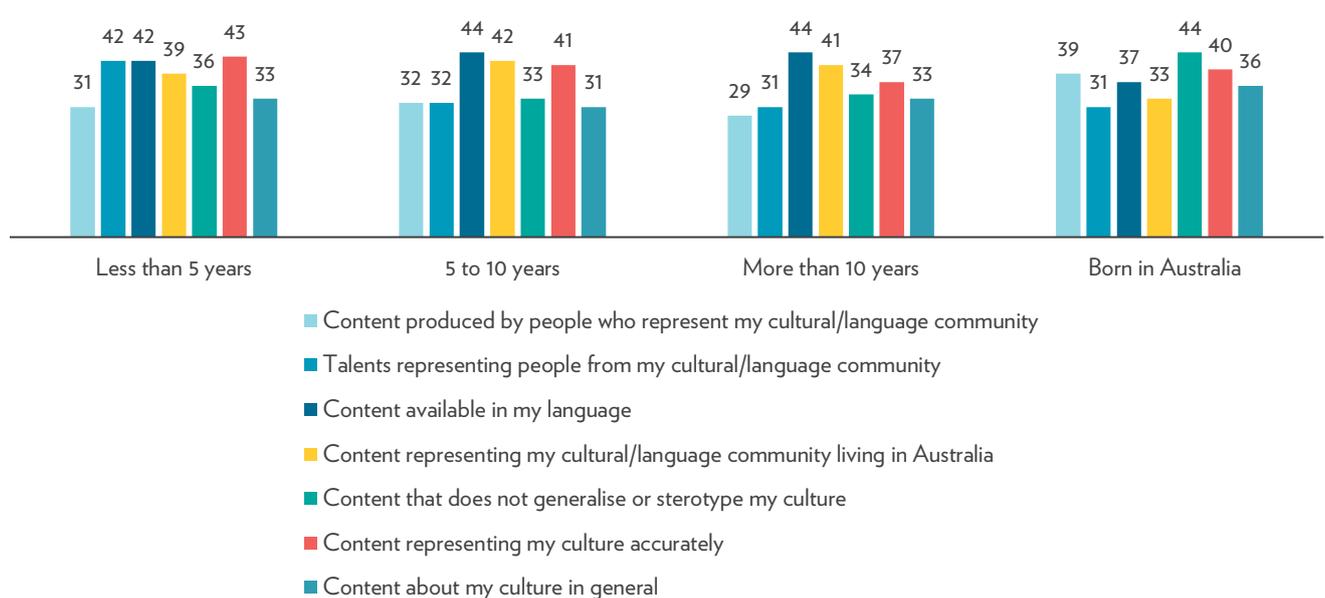
Those who had spent less than five years in Australia wanted to see more talent representing their community (42%) compared to those with 5–10 years in Australia (32%), those with more than 10 years (31%), and those who were born in Australia (31%).

Australian-born respondents wanted to see more content that does not generalise or stereotype their culture (44%) compared to migrant respondents (less than five years, 36%; 5–10 years, 33%; more than 10 years, 34%).

On the other hand, migrant respondents wanted to see more content representing their community living in Australia (less than five years, 39%; 5–10 years, 42%; more than 10 years, 41%) and content available in their language (less than five years, 42%; 5–10 years, 44%; more than 10 years, 44%) compared to Australian-born respondents (33% and 37% respectively).

Australian-born respondents had a greater desire than migrant respondents for content to be produced by members of their community (39%) (less than five years, 31%; 5–10 years, 32%; more than 10 years, 29%).

FIGURE 59 | Content needs and cultural representation by time spent living in Australia (six language communities) (%)



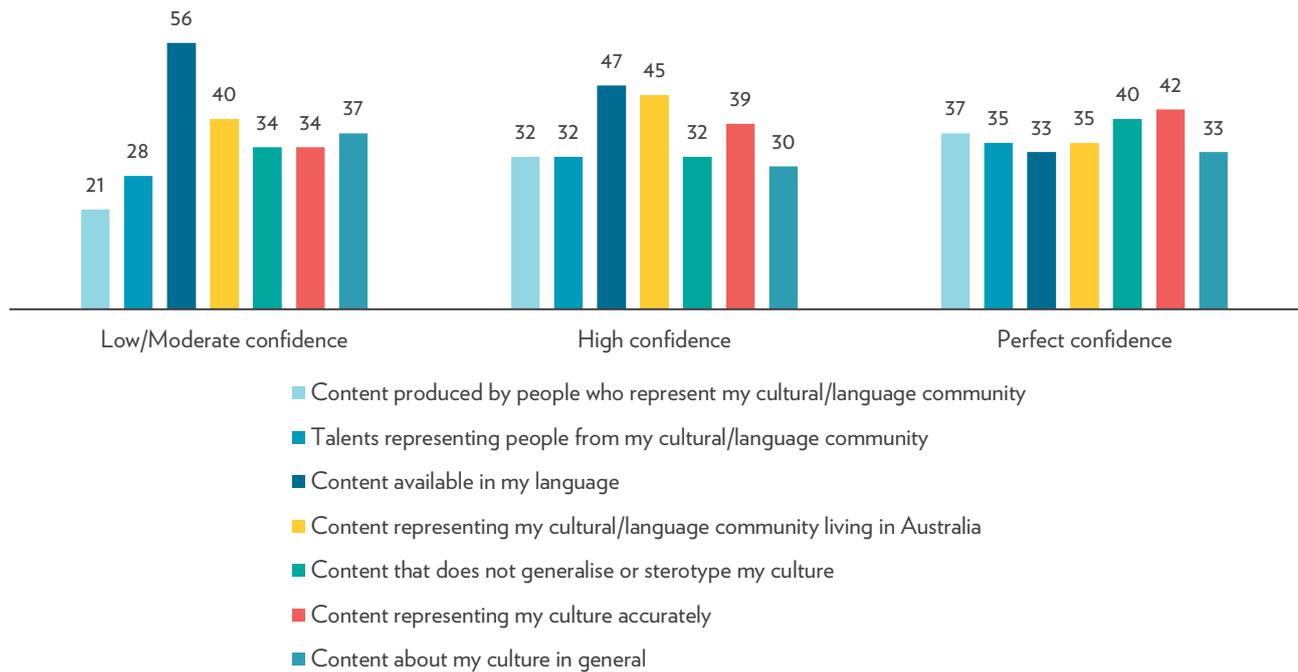
Content needs and cultural representation, and confidence in English

As confidence in English rises, the desire for media in language falls, from 56% for those with low to moderate proficiency to 33% for those with perfect confidence in English. Notably, this means that one in three with perfect confidence in English still wish to see more media in language, relative to the more than one in two of low/moderate proficiency in English (Figure 60).

Conversely, a focus on content produced by people representative of a person's cultural/language community, talent representing people from a person's cultural community, and

content accurately representing a person's culture all see an increase as English confidence rises. So, for those with higher English confidence, representation in media is a higher priority relative to those with lower levels of English confidence. In conjunction with the results focused on content in language, we could assume that, as English confidence rises, the concern for Australian media shifts from a focus on accessibility to a focus on representation.

FIGURE 60 | Content needs and cultural representation by confidence in English (six language communities) (%)



Content needs and cultural representation, and type of residency

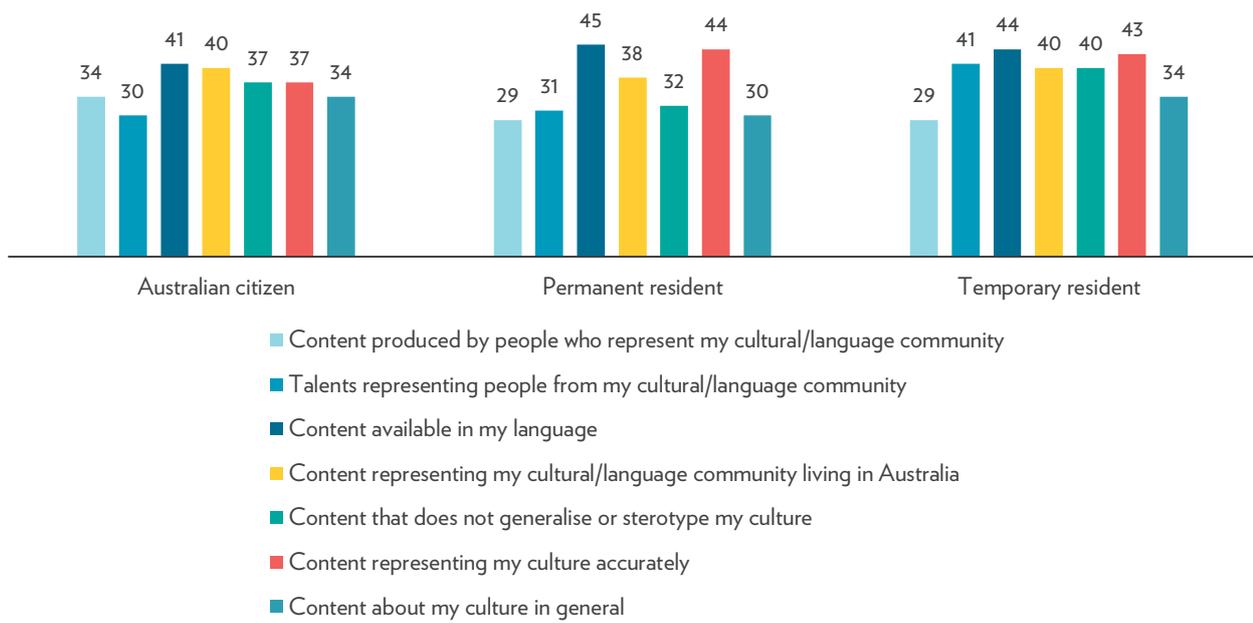
There are notable differences in content needs based on residency status. Multilingual respondents with Australian citizenship were less likely to focus on content that represented their culture accurately (36%) compared to permanent (44%) and temporary residents (43%) (Figure 61).

Temporary residents were more likely to want content that does not stereotype their culture (40%) when compared to permanent

residents (32%) and Australian citizens (37%). Temporary residents were also more likely to want talent that represents their community (41%) compared to permanent residents and Australian citizens (31% and 30% respectively).

Regardless of residency status, respondents wanted their media to provide more content available in language.

FIGURE 61 | Content needs and cultural representation by type of residency (six language communities) (%)



SUMMARY

Multilingual audiences say they would like to see more content in their language, and media content that accurately represents their cultural or language community as well as more content about their community living in Australia, indicating a lack of content that reflects their community. These desires differed by language community. Arabic speakers want to see content that accurately depicts their culture, whereas Cantonese and Punjabi speakers want more content in their language. Mandarin and Punjabi speakers also had a high desire for their community to be reflected more accurately in the media. Those born in Australia wanted to ensure their communities were not generalised or stereotyped in the media.



“With SBS radio, my Mum can enjoy her daily dose of news in Vietnamese.”

(Vietnamese speaker)

Oztrail
Deluxe 3x3m



**Hội Phụ Nữ
Nam Tự Do NSW**
THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN NSW

709



HỘI PHỤ NỮ VIỆT NAM NSW
Vietnamese Women's Association



Women in Vietnamese cultural dress at Lunar New Year celebrations in Fairfield, Sydney.

NEWS CONSUMPTION

OVERVIEW

This section of the report is dedicated to two aspects of the study. The first is how often the respondents, in their various communities and demographic segments, are consuming news. The research found that a determining factor of how often audiences consume news is their age, and as multilingual communities are younger on average compared to the general population, the overall rate of engagement with news is lower. This is important because, while the rate of engagement with news does not correlate with representation in news, it does correlate with key metrics around a sense of belonging.

The second aspect of this section investigates how much multilingual respondents' news is consumed in language compared to in English. This correlates most strongly with how confident respondents are in English. The research indicates there is a threshold of minimal engagement with news in language that increases how well-represented respondents feel in the news.



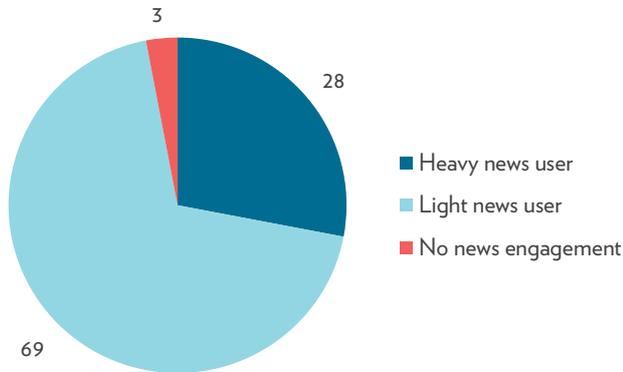


“The news media fairly and positively represents my cultural/language community. SBS has programs in my language and gives news from India in my language. It represents my community and gives genuine news about what happens in India and here (in Australia). There are also radio programs here (in Australia) started by my community for us to share ideas with each other about how to live in Australia and how to be a good citizen of Australia so it is in a positive way that things are described in my media.”

(Punjabi speaker)

FINDINGS

FIGURE 62 | News consumption among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (%)



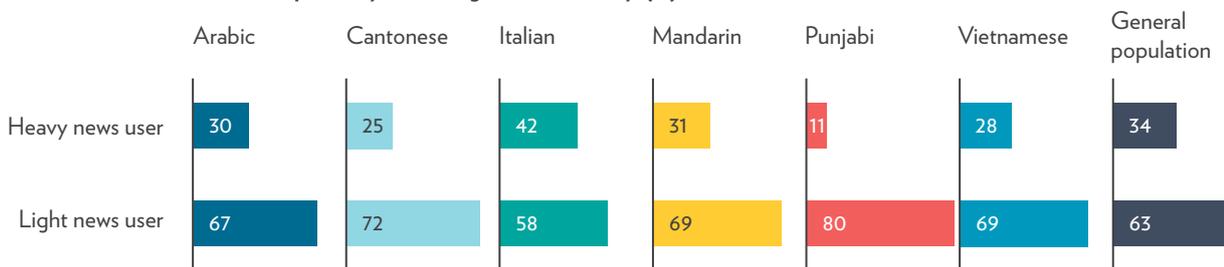
Among multilingual audiences, 28% claimed to be heavy news users (more than daily), while 69% were light news users (once a day or less) (Figure 62). Only 3% reported no news engagement.

News consumption among multilingual audiences

The highest rate of news consumption was among Italian speakers (42% heavy news users), while the lowest rate of news engagement was among Punjabi speakers (11% heavy

news users) (Figure 63). Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Italian speakers all had similar levels of daily news consumption (34%–25% heavy news users).

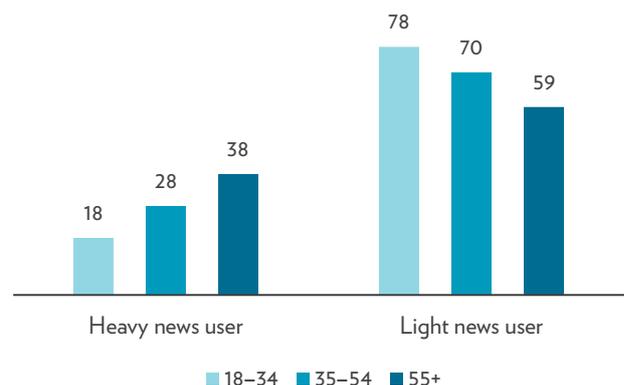
FIGURE 63 | News consumption by multilingual community (%)



News consumption by age

Age had a significant impact on rates of news consumption. Younger multilingual audiences consumed news far less often (18% heavy news users for 18–34) than older audiences (28% and 38% heavy news users for 35–54 and 55+ respectively) (Figure 64).

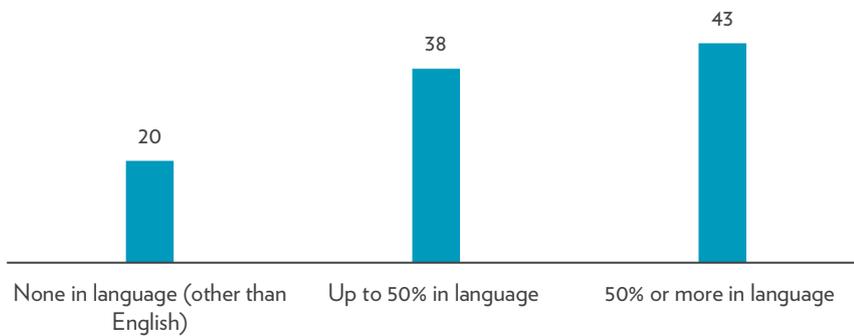
FIGURE 64 | News consumption by age (six language communities) (%)



News consumption in language

For multilingual audiences, consumption of news in language remains high, with only 20% never consuming news in language other than English. 43% consumed over half in language (Figure 65).

FIGURE 65 | News consumption in language among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (%)

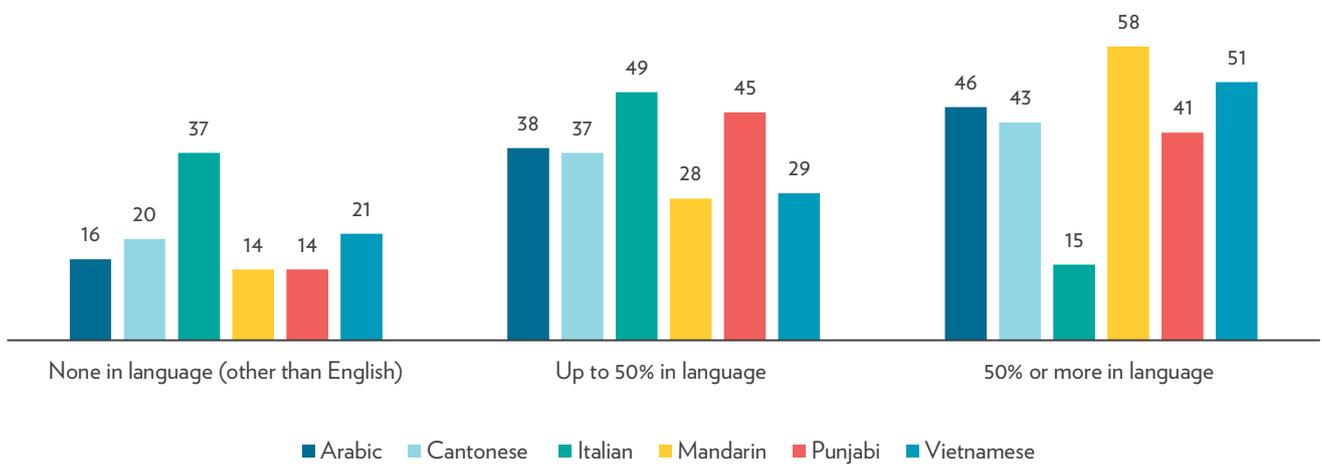


News consumption in language among multilingual audiences

The majority of each language community consumed at least some news in language. Italian speakers were the lowest consumers of in-language news, with 63% consuming at least

some news in language. Punjabi and Mandarin speakers were the highest, with 86% consuming some amount of news in language (Figure 66).

FIGURE 66 | News consumption in language by multilingual community (%)



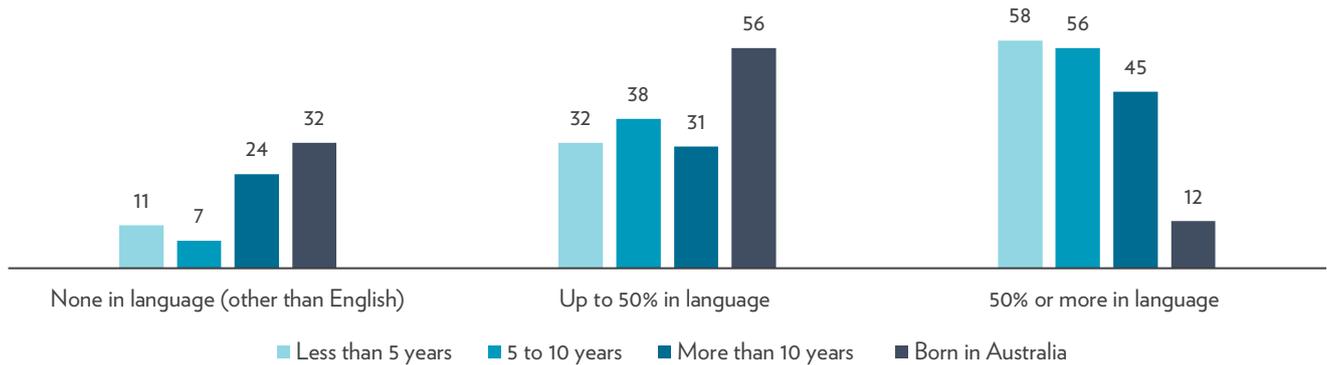
News consumption and time spent living in Australia

The longer respondents had lived in Australia, and for those born in Australia, the less news in language they consumed.

Australia-born respondents are significantly more likely to have never consumed news in language (32% non-engagement) and, if engaged, had a lower rate of news consumption in language overall compared to migrant audiences overall, with just 12% consuming 50% or more their news in language (Figure 67).

Much higher rates of engagement with news in language were reported among new and recent migrants who had lived in Australia for less than five years (just 11% non-engagement and 58% consuming at least 50% of their news in language) or for 5–10 years (7% and 56% respectively). Migrants who had lived in Australia for more than 10 years had a noted reduction in in-language news consumption, with approximately one in four (24%) reporting no news consumption in language at all.

FIGURE 67 | News consumption in language by time spent living in Australia (six language communities) (%)



News consumption and confidence in English

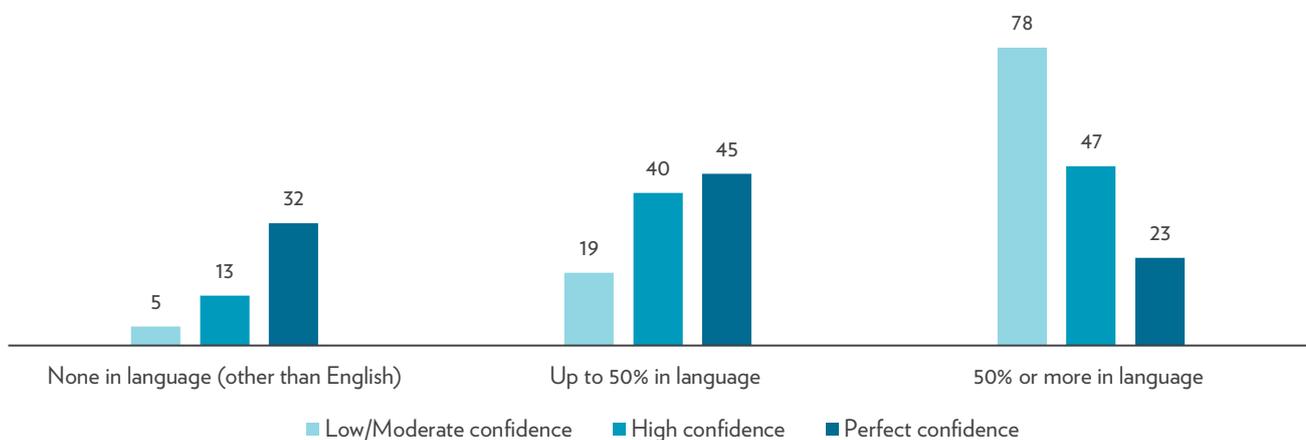
Multilingual audiences' engagement with news in language is evidently related to English literacy.

Audiences with low/moderate confidence in English reported the highest rate of engagement with in-language news (95%), with 78% consuming half or more of their news in language (Figure 68).

In comparison, audiences with perfect confidence in English are the least engaged with news in language, with approximately

one in three (32%) having consumed none and just 23% consuming half or more of their news in language. This, however, still remains higher than engagement with in-language news among Australian-born audience (32% and 12% respectively – Figure 67).

FIGURE 68 | News consumption in language by confidence in English (six language communities) (%)



News consumption in language by age

While different age groups have different rates of in-language news consumption, the overarching amount of news consumed by each age group is roughly similar, with a slight increase with age.

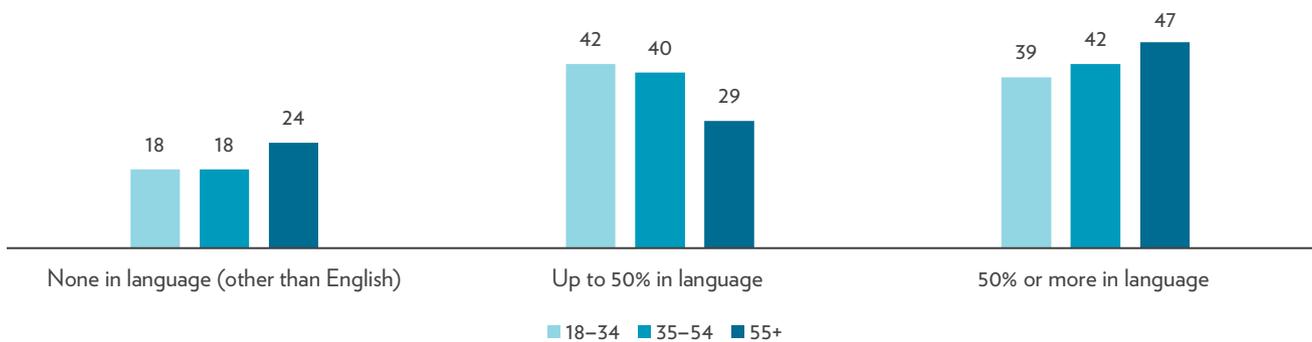
Audiences aged 55+ were the most polarising in their engagement with news in language. They reported the highest rate of non-consumption (24%). However, if engaged, they are the most likely to consume half or more of their news in language (47%).

Audiences aged 18–34 and 35–54 had very similar patterns of in-language news consumption, with 18% non-engagement and

even distribution of their populations across rates of in-language news consumption.

The study found that news consumption in language increases with age, with 39%, 42% and 47% reporting consumption of half or more of their news in language among audiences aged 18–34, 35–54 and 55+ respectively (Figure 69).

FIGURE 69 | News consumption in language by age (six language communities) (%)



SUMMARY

The study found that the majority of respondents — both multilingual and general population — engage with news daily; however, this is lower for younger multilingual audiences. Regardless of time spent in Australia, confidence in English, residency status, language spoken, or age, all multilingual communities in this study engage with some amount of news in language. Recent migrants are more likely to consume news in language compared to those who have lived in Australia for more than 10 years or those born in Australia. Those who have lower confidence in English tend to consume in-language news content more than those who have higher confidence. This implies that for organisations and governments, targeting recent migrants with lower levels of English proficiency with in-language information is essential to maximise reach within this segment of the population. Ensuring that these communities have access to news in language is critical to fostering a greater sense of belonging in Australia.

Lunar New Year celebrations at Cabramatta, Sydney.



*"I often have the option of speaking Mandarin when attending community events and watching news media content."
(Mandarin speaker)*

PLATFORM PREFERENCE

OVERVIEW

The way we access news, and our preferences for where we get our news from, determines a great deal about the kind of information we receive, how reliable it is, what our preferred method of consumption is, and even how we like information served to us.

In a rapidly digitising and globalised world, access to information from all sources has never been easier, nor broader. It is critical that media and news organisations understand the pathways audiences most commonly use to access information. This is also true for any entity sharing important information with communities, whether at the local, state, national, or global level.

By better understanding where audiences are and what they need, organisations can ensure effective news and information distribution — not only at a broad level but also targeted towards specific communities or population segments, using the most appropriate communication channels.

We asked respondents to rank which media they mainly used to access news in English and in language. The platforms included in the survey were TV, online video/streaming services, news websites, news apps, print newspapers, radio, audio streaming/podcasts, YouTube and social media generally.





FINDINGS

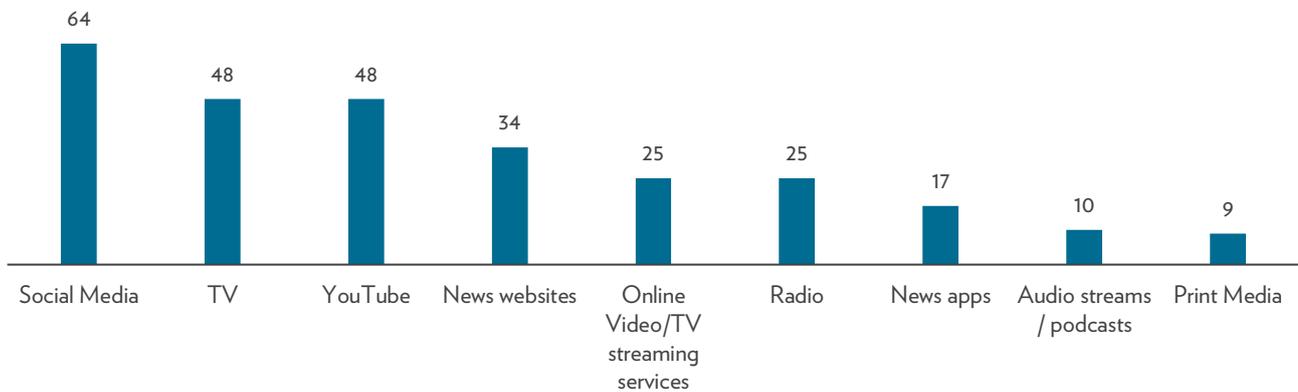
Platform preference for news in English

Multilingual audiences reported that social media was the primary platform they used to access news (64% ranked social media in their top three platforms for news in English and 28% ranked it as their top choice) (Figure 70). Television ranked second-highest as a source for news in English (48% ranked it in their top three and 24% as their top choice). YouTube ranked third-highest, equalling TV, with 48% ranking it in their top three choices and 15% ranking it as their top choice.

Print media had the lowest selection, with just 9% ranking it in their top three choices as a news source and only 2% ranking it as their top choice.

As the multilingual segment of the population skews younger than the general population, it is likely that age — rather than multilingual status — is the main contributing factor to the difference observed when compared with a more national sample, such as in the *Digital News Report Australia 2025*.⁹

FIGURE 70 | Ranked in top 3 platforms for news in English among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (%)



Platform preference for news in English among multilingual audiences

The breakdown of news platform preference and ranking for language communities is largely tied to the average age of each group.

Italian speakers are an older, more established community in Australia, with an average age of 59. They indicated a heavy preference towards legacy media, with TV as their top preference. Approximately 71% ranked TV in their top three platforms for news in English. Among Italian speakers, traditional platforms are more popular than in other language groups, with radio at 42% and print media at 16% (Figure 71). Conversely, Italian speakers had a much lower preference for social media (43%) and YouTube (26%).

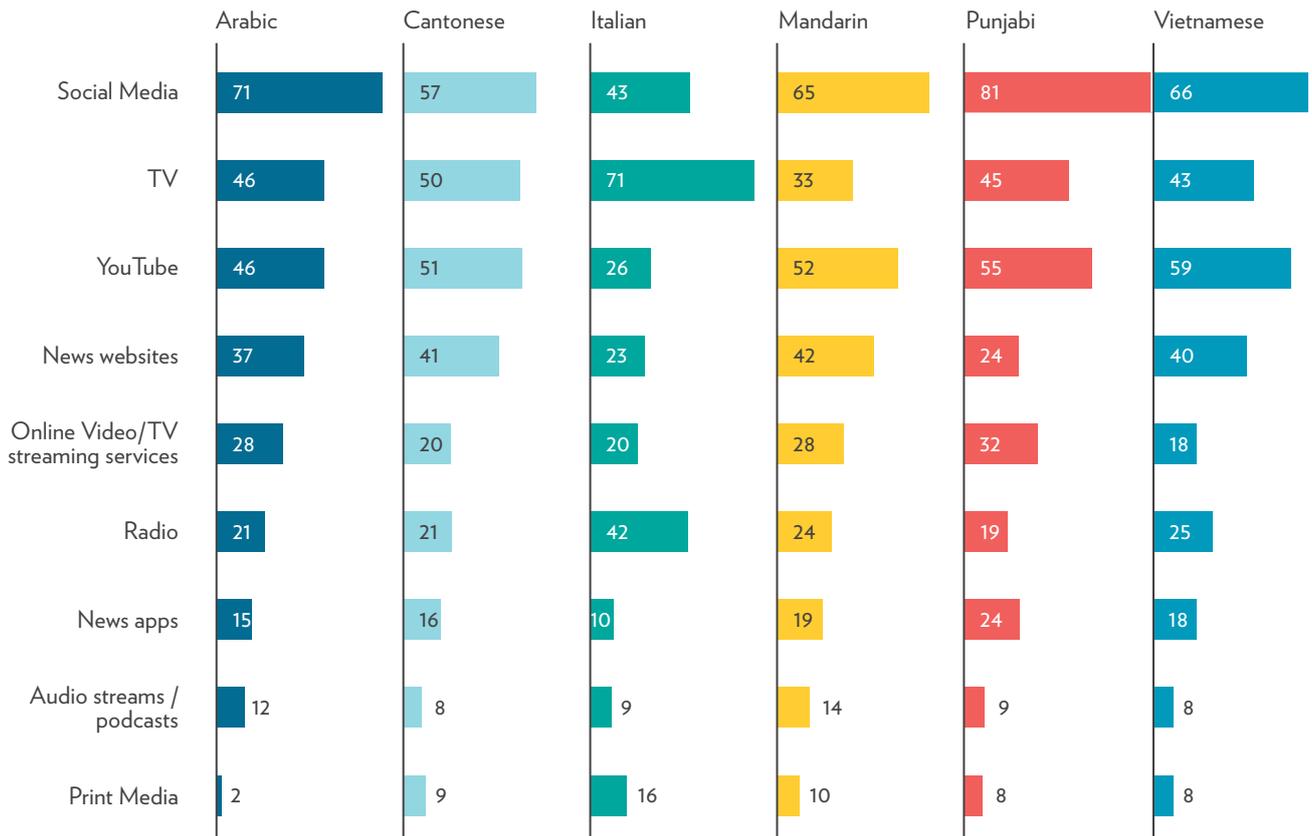
Social media preference was lower for language communities with older populations (Cantonese and Italian) on average, and

higher for those with younger population on average (Punjabi, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Arabic speakers). Notably, Arabic speakers showed a higher preference for social media than their average age would predict. In other words, while the average Arabic respondent was slightly older than Mandarin or Vietnamese respondents, their preference for social media as a source of news in English was notably higher.

Interestingly, for news websites, both Italian and Punjabi speakers, part of the oldest and youngest communities, reported the lowest results overall (Italian 23% and Punjabi 24%), while Arabic (37%), Cantonese (41%), Mandarin (42%), and Vietnamese (40%) speakers all reported similar results.

⁹ Park, S., Fisher, C., McGuinness, K., Lee, J., Fujita, M., Haw, A., McCallum, K. & Nardi, G. (2025). *Digital News Report: Australia 2025*. Canberra: News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. 10.60836/md4e-k570

FIGURE 71 | Ranked in top 3 platforms for news in English by multilingual community (%)

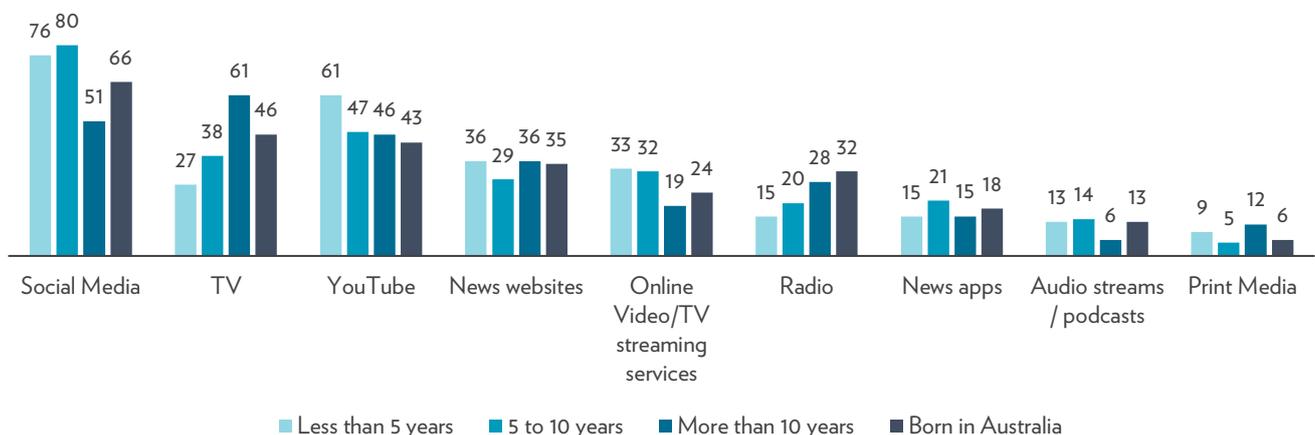


Preferred news platform in English and time spent living in Australia

More recent migrants had a higher preference towards social media and YouTube as a source of news in English when compared to those who had been in Australia for longer. Respondents who had lived in Australia for less than five years were more likely to prefer YouTube, with 61% ranking it in their top three as a source of news in English, compared to those who had been in Australia longer (5–10 years, 47%; more than 10 years, 46%; Australian-born, 43%).

Preference for TV as a source of news in English was highest among those who had lived in Australia for more than 10 years (61%) — more than double the rate of those with less than five years in Australia (27%) (Figure 72).

FIGURE 72 | Ranked in top 3 in English news platform by type of residency (six language communities) (%)

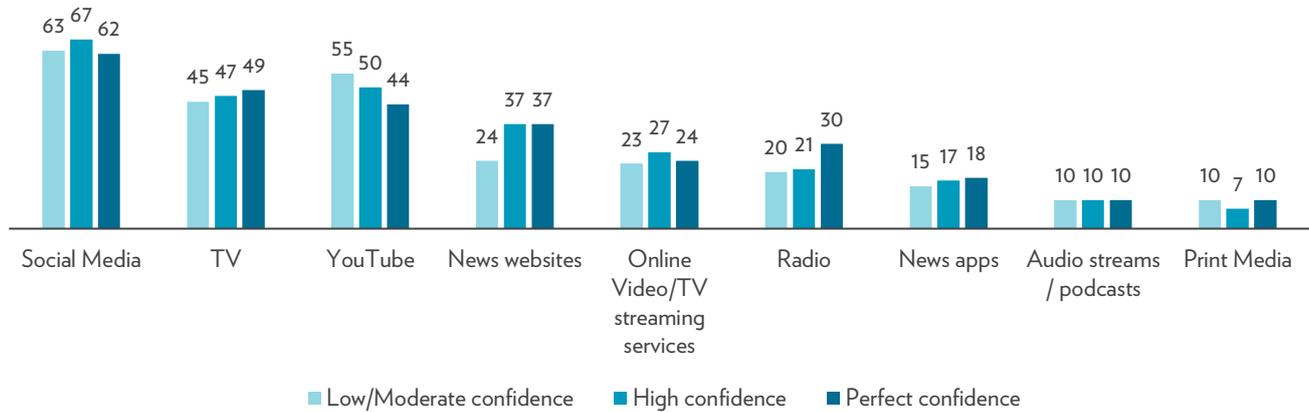


Preferred news platform in English and confidence in English

Respondents with lower levels of confidence in English were more likely to have a preference for YouTube (55%) as a source of news in English compared to those with higher levels of confidence (44% for perfect confidence in English) (Figure 73).

Lower confidence in English also saw a lower level of preference for news websites (24%), while perfect confidence in English saw a higher preference for radio (30%).

FIGURE 73 | Ranked in top 3 in English news platform by confidence in English (six language communities) (%)



Platform preference for news in English and type of residency

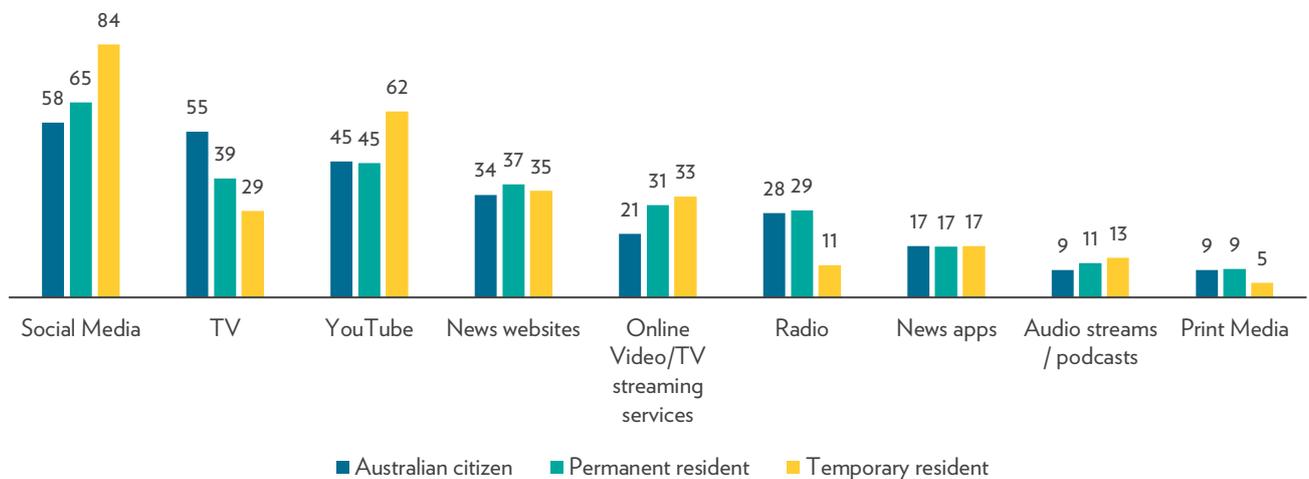
Among multilingual Australian citizens, preferences for news platforms in English generally align with the general population, with a few notable exceptions. Multilingual audiences who are Australian citizens had the lowest overall preference towards YouTube as a source of news in English and a higher preference towards radio as a source of news in English.

while traditional avenues such as TV (29%) and radio (11%) were significantly less preferred (Figure 74).

Multilingual Australian citizens had a primary preference for social media as a news source in English (58%), with TV (55%) and YouTube (45%) ranked second and third respectively.

Temporary residents had a heavy preference towards social media (84%) and YouTube (62%) as sources of news in English,

FIGURE 74 | Ranked in top 3 platforms for news in English by type of residency (six language communities) (%)



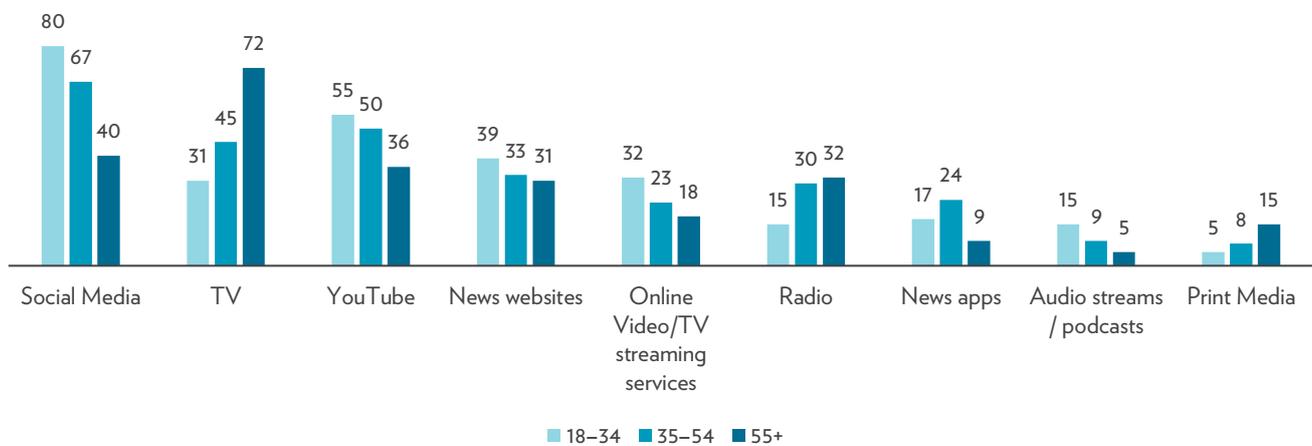
Platform preference for news in English by age

Some of the most significant shifts in preference for platforms for news in English are observable across age groups. Audiences aged 18–34 were twice as likely (80%) as those aged 55+ (40%) to prefer social media as a source of news (Figure 75). Conversely, audiences aged 55+ were more than twice as likely (72%) than audiences aged 18–35 (31%) to prefer TV as a source of news.

Arguably, younger multilingual audiences — including those aged 35–54 — are reducing their preference for TV as a source of news in English more rapidly than older audiences are adopting social media as a preferred source.

Radio sees a similar pattern, with younger multilingual audiences significantly less likely to prefer it as a news source. However, audio streaming and podcasting attract a younger audience. Overall, radio and audio have maintained relative stability as preferred news sources — with a slight decline among younger audiences — while the delivery has shifted from radio to the internet, and the format from talk shows to podcasts, across generations.

FIGURE 75 | Ranked in top 3 platforms for news in English by age (six language communities) (%)

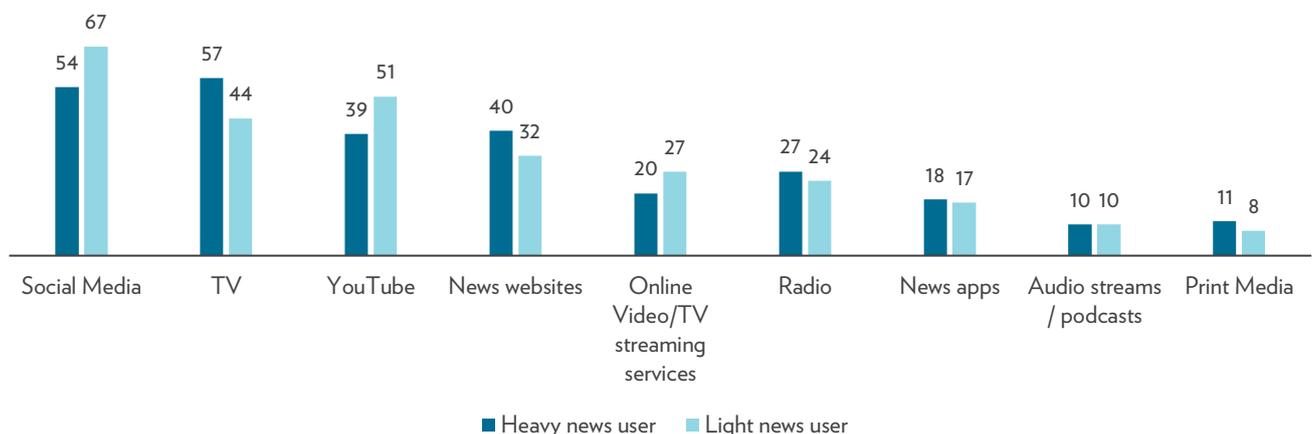


Preferred news platform in English and news consumption

When it comes to which news platforms are preferred by heavy and light news users, heavy news users most preferred TV followed by social media (57% and 54% respectively), while light news users most preferred social media followed by YouTube (67% and 51% respectively) (Figure 76).

The least preferred platforms for both light and heavy news users were print and audio streams/podcasts. The most significant differences in preference between levels of news usage were for social media and TV equally, with a 13 percentage point difference.

FIGURE 76 | Ranked in top 3 in-language news platform and news access (six language communities) (%)



Preferred in-language news platforms

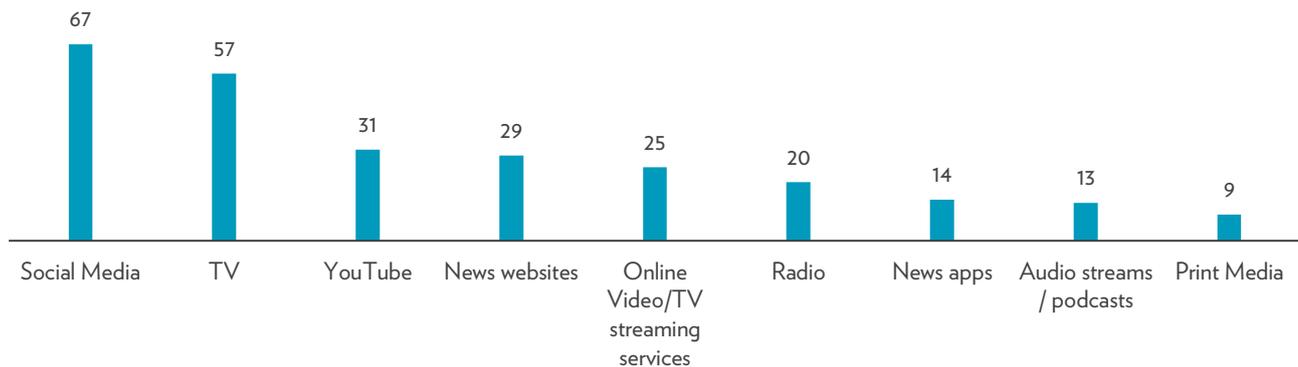
Multilingual audiences' preferred platforms for news in language were largely similar to their preferences for news in English, with a few key differences. Preferences skewed towards social media (67%) and YouTube (57%) before falling significantly to TV (31%) and news websites (29%). This indicates that social media and YouTube are the most preferred platforms for in-language news (Figure 77).

The largest observable difference was in a preference for TV (31% in language vs 48% in English). We also observed an

increased preference for YouTube (57% in language vs 48% in English) (see Figure 70).

This may reflect differences in the volume of news available through each platform, as well as the ease of access and the increasingly global nature of social media and YouTube, which now have the capability to function as global news networks.

FIGURE 77 | Ranked in top 3 in-language news platform among multilingual audiences (six language communities) (%)



Preferred in-language news platform and the nuances among multilingual community

Language communities see similar trends relative to their preference for news in English, when compared to their preferences for in-language news. Variations in social media preference were slight across language groups when compared with preference for news platforms in English vs in language.

Arabic speakers were the only language community to maintain a rate of preference for TV as a platform for news between news in English and in-language news (39% in language vs 46% in English) (Figure 78). Every other language community saw a significant reduction in preference for TV.

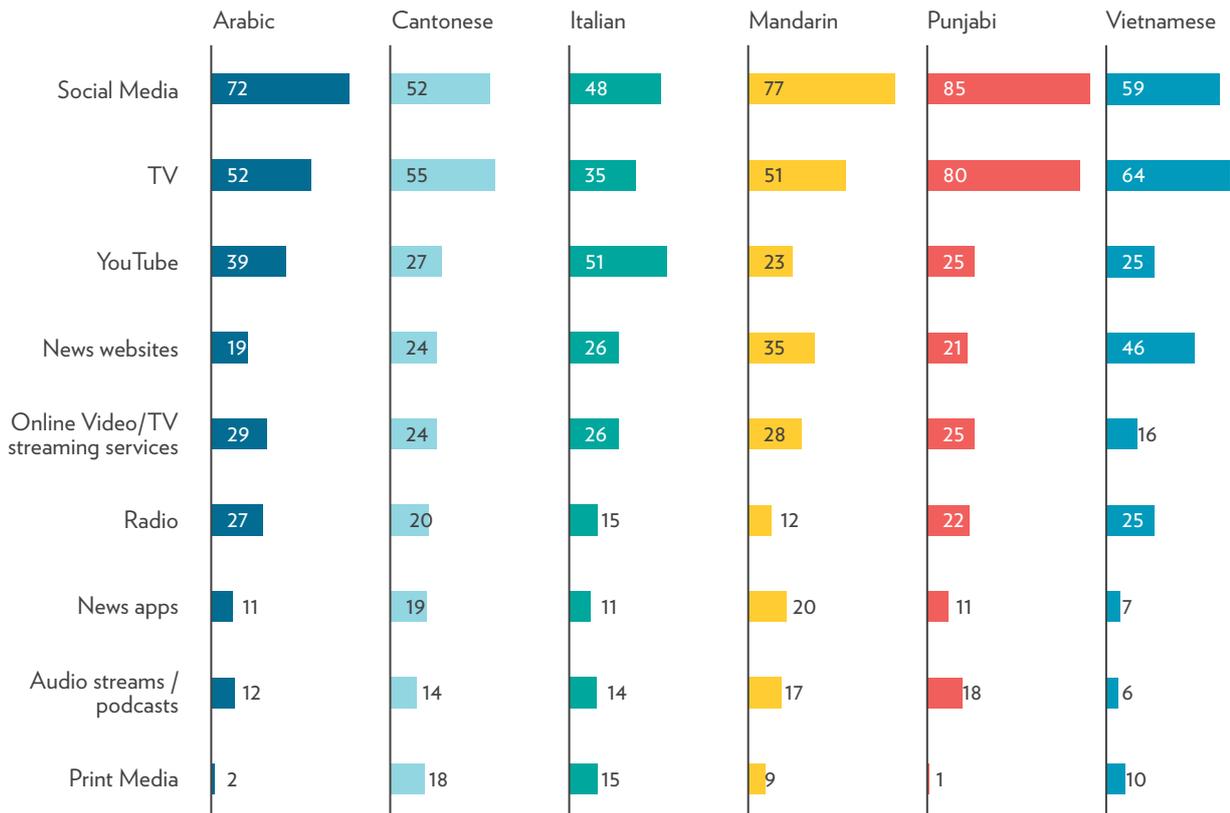
Most language communities saw an increase in preference for YouTube as a platform for in-language news, as compared to

their preference for it as a platform for news in English. The largest increase was among Punjabi speakers — 55% preferred YouTube as a source for news in English, compared to 80% as a source for in-language news.

Arabic speakers preferred news websites as a source for news in English (37%), compared to in-language news (19%) — a significant difference.

Italian speakers were more likely to access news in English on radio (42%), compared to in-language news (15%) — also a significant difference.

FIGURE 78 | Ranked in top 3 in-language news platform by multilingual community (%)

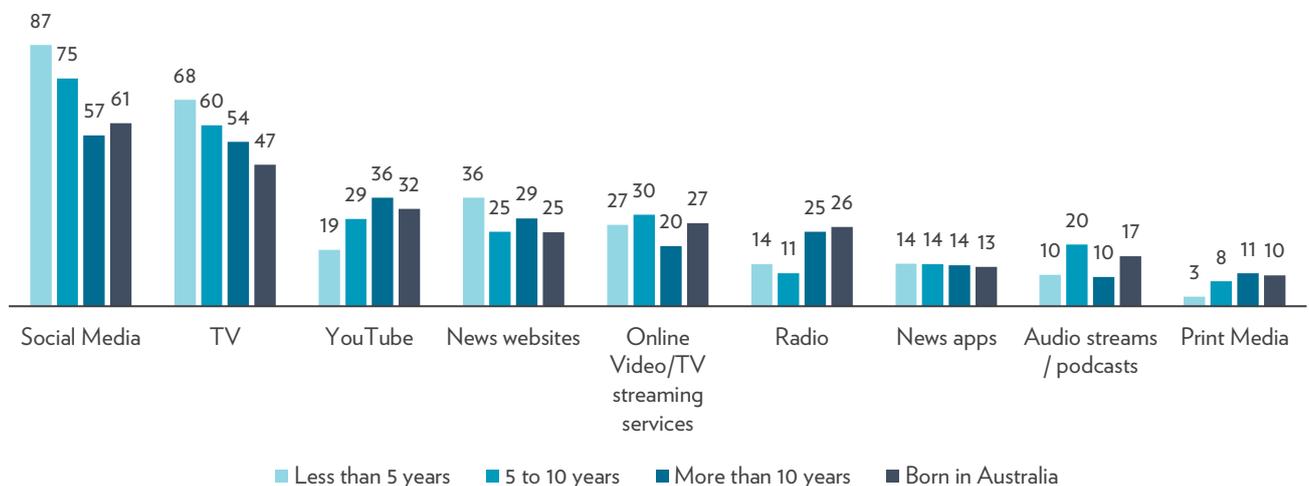


Preferred in-language news platform and time spent living in Australia

Time spent living in Australia is strongly linked to preferences towards platform for in-language news. More recent migrants had a much stronger preference for in-language news on social media (87%) or YouTube (68%) when compared to more established language groups or Australian-born audiences (Figure 79). Recent migrants' preference for traditional media such as print, TV, or radio was lower than established

communities. This data, in concert with data on how well-represented more recent migrants feel in SBS News relative to more established communities or Australian-born audiences, is indicative of where SBS needs to focus more of its resources and attention when it comes to servicing new multilingual arrivals to Australia.

FIGURE 79 | Ranked in top 3 in-language news platform by time spent living in Australia (six language communities) (%)



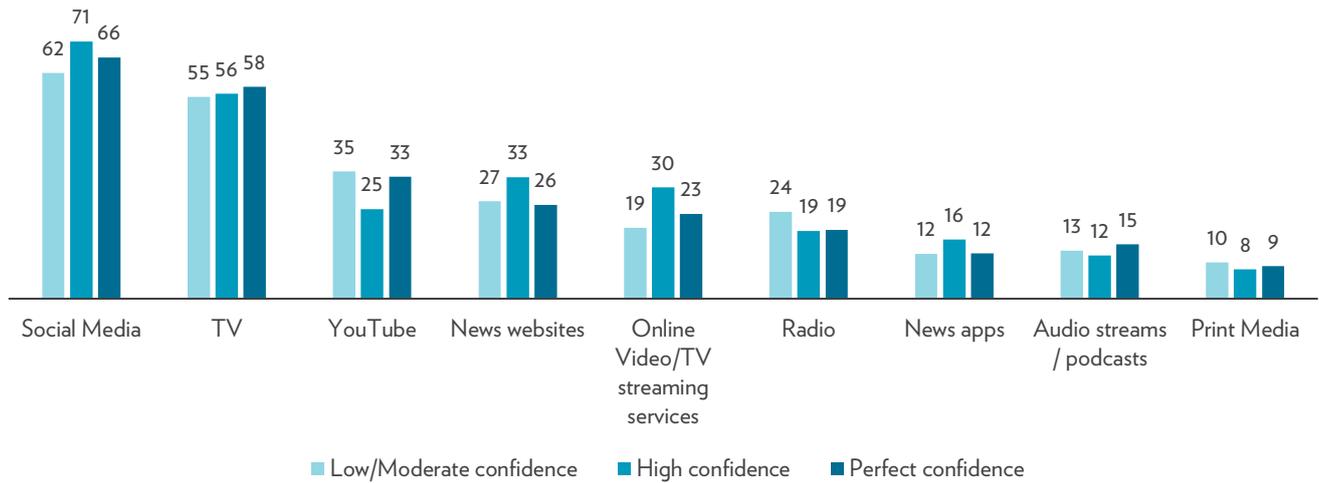
Preferred in-language platform and confidence in English

English confidence had little impact on platform preference for in-language news, with social media remaining the most preferred source, followed by YouTube, regardless of confidence level (Figure 80).

While the overall shifts in preference from TV to YouTube observable at a total multilingual level hold true here, it

is noteworthy that many of the differences observable in preferences in platform for news in English are no longer present when it comes to preferences for platforms for in-language news.

FIGURE 80 | Ranked in top 3 news platforms for news in language by confidence in English (six language communities) (%)

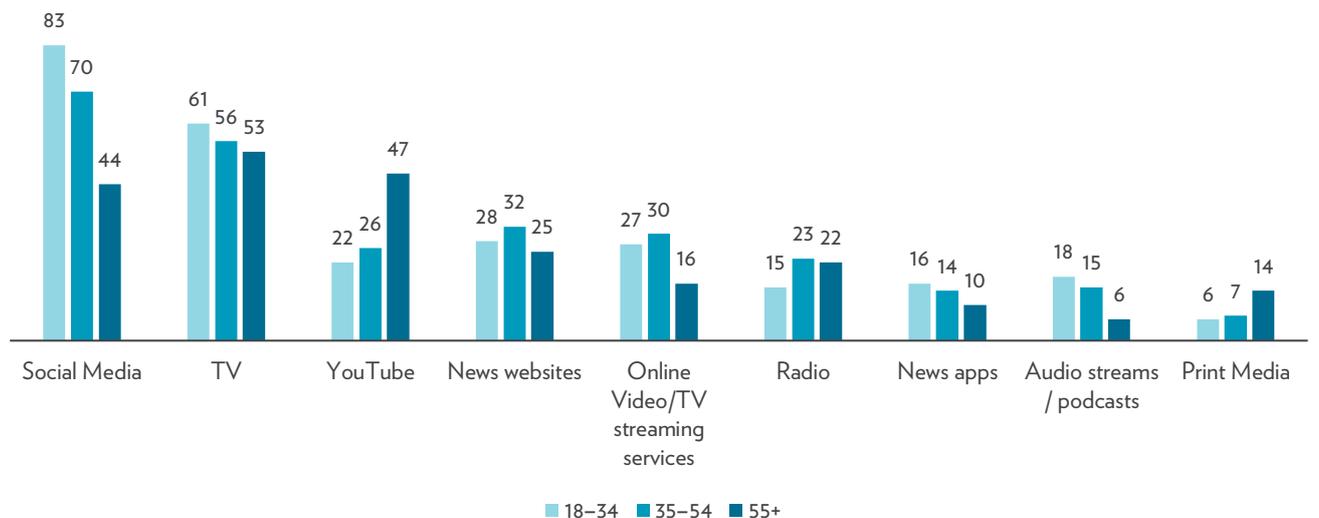


Preferred in-language news platform by age

By age, there were similar levels of preference for platforms for in-language news when compared to news in English, with the

exception of an overall increase in preference for YouTube and an overall decrease in preference for TV (Figure 81).

FIGURE 81 | Ranked in top 3 in-language news platform by age (six language communities) (%)

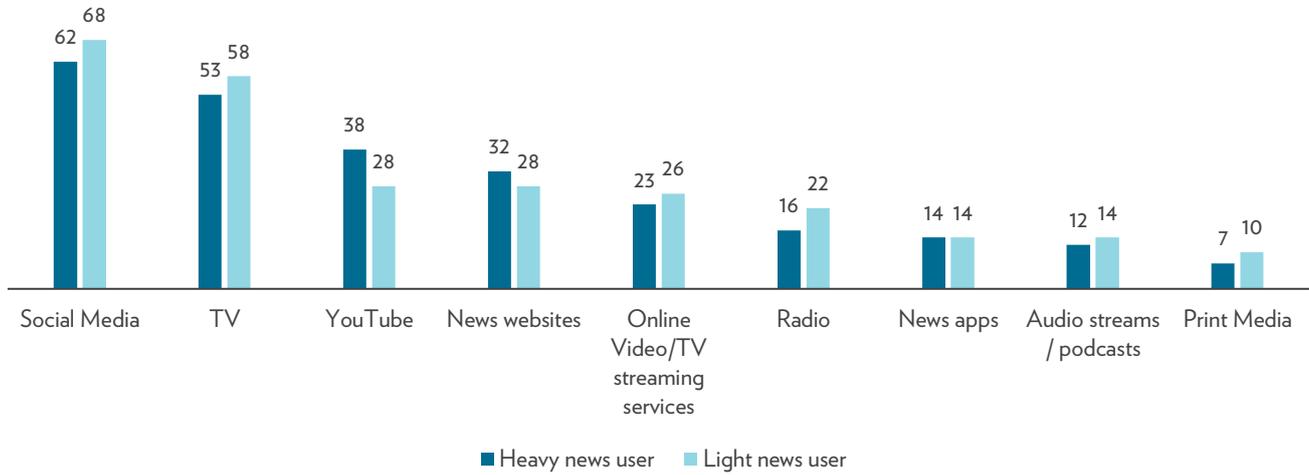


Preferred news platform for language news and news consumption

Results for platform preference for in-language news for each level of news engagement (daily/weekly/less often) were overall consistent with the results for preference for platforms for

news in English, with the key difference of a reduction in TV preference and an increase in YouTube preference (Figure 82).

FIGURE 82 | Ranked in top 3 news platforms for news in language by news access (six language communities) (%)



SUMMARY

The top preferred platform among multilingual audiences to get news in English was social media, followed by TV and YouTube. Recent migrants preferred social media compared to those who have been living in Australia for 10+ years. Temporary residents are also more likely to prefer social media to get news in English. Those who have lived in Australia for more than 10 years are more likely to prefer radio and TV compared to recent migrants. The pattern was similar for audience preference for news in language. The top preferred platform was social media, followed by YouTube and TV. However, TV news was much less preferred in language compared to news in English, which may be because of the availability. As with general news consumption, younger audiences are much more likely to prefer social media and YouTube, whereas older generations prefer TV as a source of news in language.



Community members participating in Diwali celebrations at Marsden Park, Sydney.

