

Consumer Research: Subscription Services

 FOCALDATA

 Business
Software
Alliance

November 2025

FocalData conducted over 1,000 interviews with adults in Australia.

METHODOLOGY:



Mode: Online survey



Sample: N=1,038



Fieldwork company: FocalData



Dates: 22-27 October 2025

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Each market was weighted to appropriate estimates for gender, education, and age.

Gender:

- Male: 49%
- Female: 51%

Age:

- 18-24: 12%
- 25-44: 36%
- 45-54: 32%
- 65+: 20%

Highlighted findings.

SUBSCRIPTION LANDSCAPE

- 6-in-10 Australians believe they are best equipped to make purchasing decisions on their own, without government intervention.
- Two-thirds (67%) of Australians agree with an argument for subscriptions versus one-time purchases; and most (60%) prefer paying less for a longer-term subscription than paying more for a month-to-month subscription (40%).
- 94% of Australians rate ease of access and convenience as a top benefit of subscriptions, and about the same share say so about flexibility to cancel (95%).
- 80% see a difference between subscriptions for **personal** and **professional use**.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Australians point to the length of a subscription's terms as being the main reason they don't read them in full (66%). What they most want to see is info about how much they will be charged (67%); only 18% want to see info about how frequently they'll be contacted.
- Three-quarters of Australians **do not** want to see a longer version of the terms when signing up (77%).

FREE TRIALS & CANCELLING

- A little more than three-quarters (76%) appreciate subscriptions' free trials, and most Australians (80%) support being asked for an email address when signing up for a subscription – even just the free trial.
- A substantial portion of Australians – up to 71% - admit to having “binged and cancelled” – mostly for streaming services.
- 77% support the practice of being offered a discount when attempting to cancel a subscription, and 63% say this might be a reason they, themselves, would consider cancelling; another 73% support being asked for their feedback when cancelling.
- Australians strongly support a straightforward functionality on the subscription website, such as a “Manage Account” button or link within account settings (92%).

REMINDERS

- Most Australians **do not** want monthly reminders of renewal or charges – for both annual-billed-monthly (58%) and month-to-month (59%) subscriptions.
- Almost two-thirds (64%) feel they get the right amount of emails from companies about subscriptions, and another 28% feel they get **too many**. Just 8% feel they get **too few** emails from companies about subscriptions.
- Most expect a reminder email for an annual subscription between 1 month and 2 weeks out.

Commentary on findings.

- **Consumers want control, not intervention:** Six-in-ten Australians believe they are best equipped to make their own purchasing decisions, favoring personal responsibility over government oversight.
- **Subscriptions deliver value:** The majority of Australians (67%) agree that subscriptions offer advantages over one-time purchases, and most (60%) would rather pay less for a longer-term subscription than pay more for month-to-month. Consumers also see the value in free trials, with 76% reporting benefitting from them.
- **Convenience and flexibility are top benefits:** Nearly all Australians rate ease of access (94%) and the flexibility to cancel (95%) as top benefits of subscriptions, and a vast majority (92%) strongly support straightforward functionality on the subscription website, such as a “Manage Account” button or link within account settings that allows them to cancel.
- **Consumers know what they want to see in the terms & conditions – and what they don’t want to see:** What matters most to them is transparency about charges (67%), not the frequency of communications (just 18%). The vast majority (77%) do not want longer, more complex terms.
- **Flexibility to cancel – and rewards to stay – work for consumers:** A substantial number (71%) know people who've “binged and cancelled” streaming services. Most (87%) support being informed of the consequences of cancellation, while another 77% support being offered discounts when cancelling, and 73% welcome feedback requests.
- **Consumers don’t want unnecessary reminders:** Most Australians do not want monthly renewal reminders, whether billed annually or monthly (58–59%). Nearly two-thirds (64%) feel companies strike the right balance with subscription communications, and only a tiny minority (8%) want *more*.

Subscription Landscape

Almost six-in-ten Australians believe consumers are equipped to make purchasing decisions without the need for government intervention.

Which comes closer to your view?

Consumers are best equipped to make purchasing decisions on their own **without government intervention.**

Consumers need government intervention to **protect them from companies.**



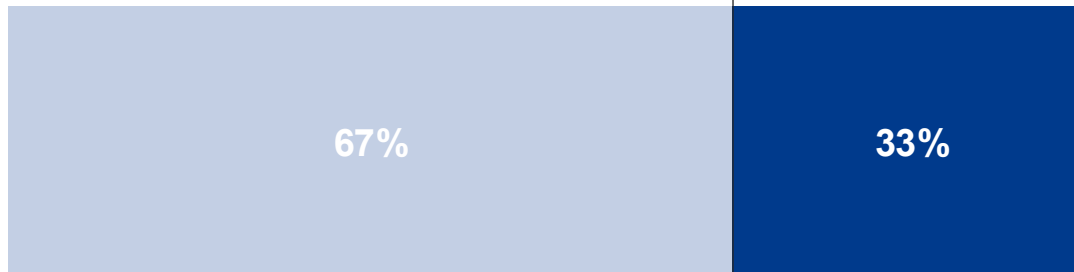
5% selected "not sure"

Two-thirds of Australians see the benefit in subscription models over one-time purchases.

Which comes closer to your view?

Subscription models provide people with **ongoing access to services or content – and automatic software updates** – at a lower upfront cost since companies can offer discounts when they have a predictable revenue stream.

Subscription models **force you to agree to complicated, confusing contracts and pay for ongoing access** to services or content when sometimes all you need is a simple, one-time purchase option.

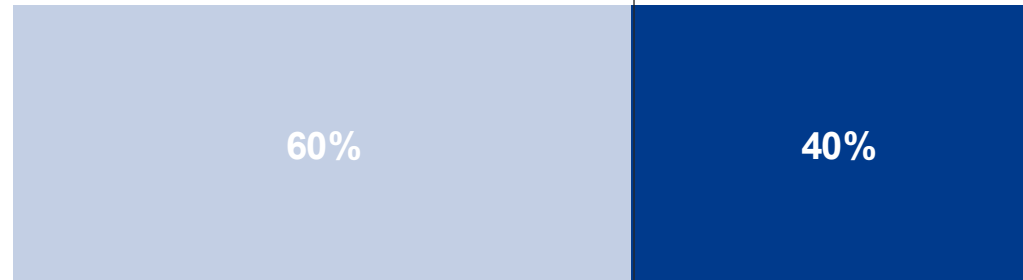


Nearly six-in-ten prefer a longer-term subscription at a discount.

Which comes closer to your view?

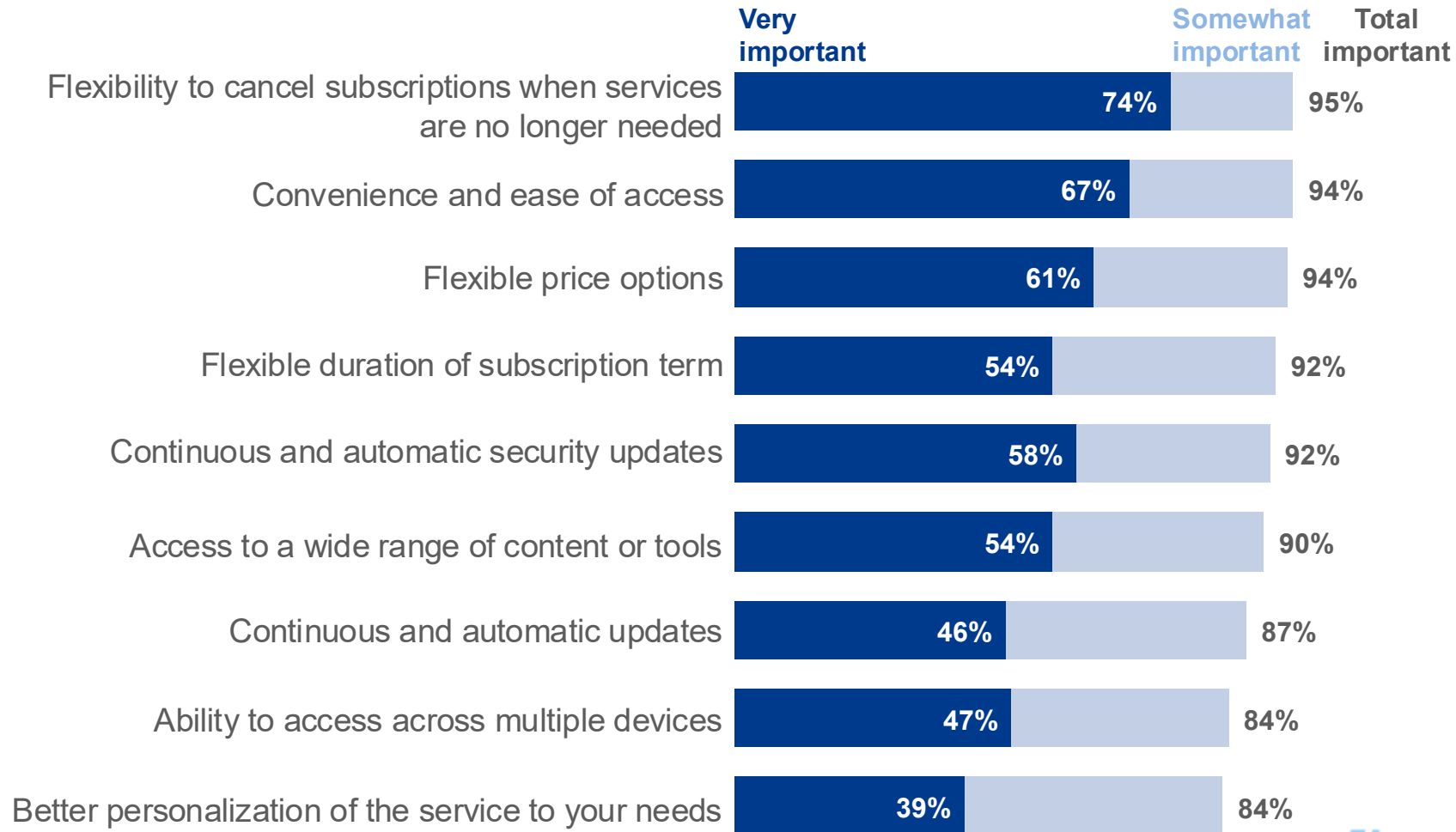
I would prefer to access digital content and services via a **longer-term subscription offered at a discount.**

I would prefer to access digital content and services via a **recurring subscription that can be cancelled any time, but at a higher monthly price.**



Flexibility and convenience are the most important benefits of subscriptions to Australians.

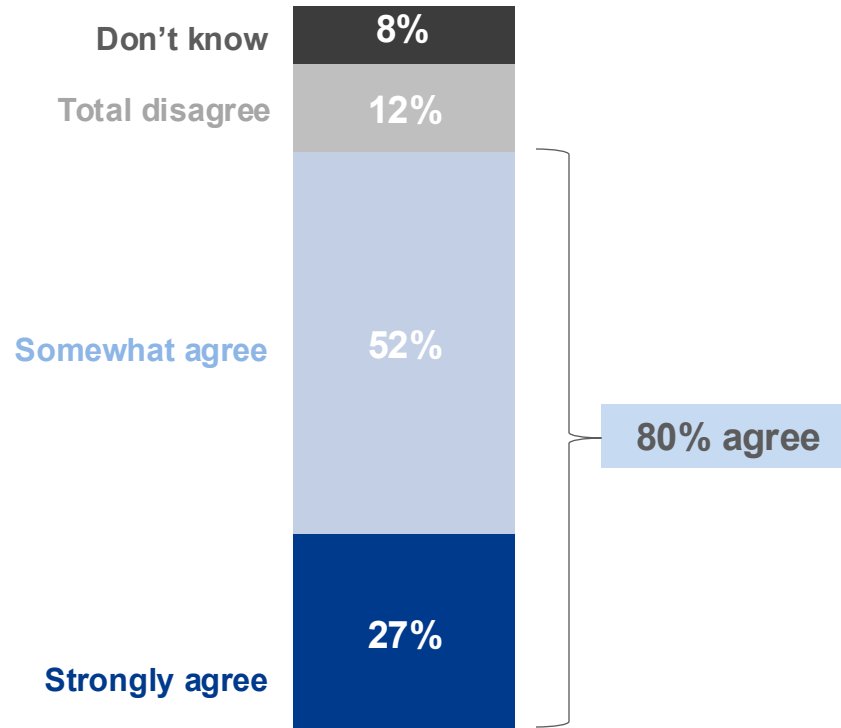
How important is each benefit of subscriptions to you?



Most see a difference between subscriptions for personal and professional use, and over half trust software companies.

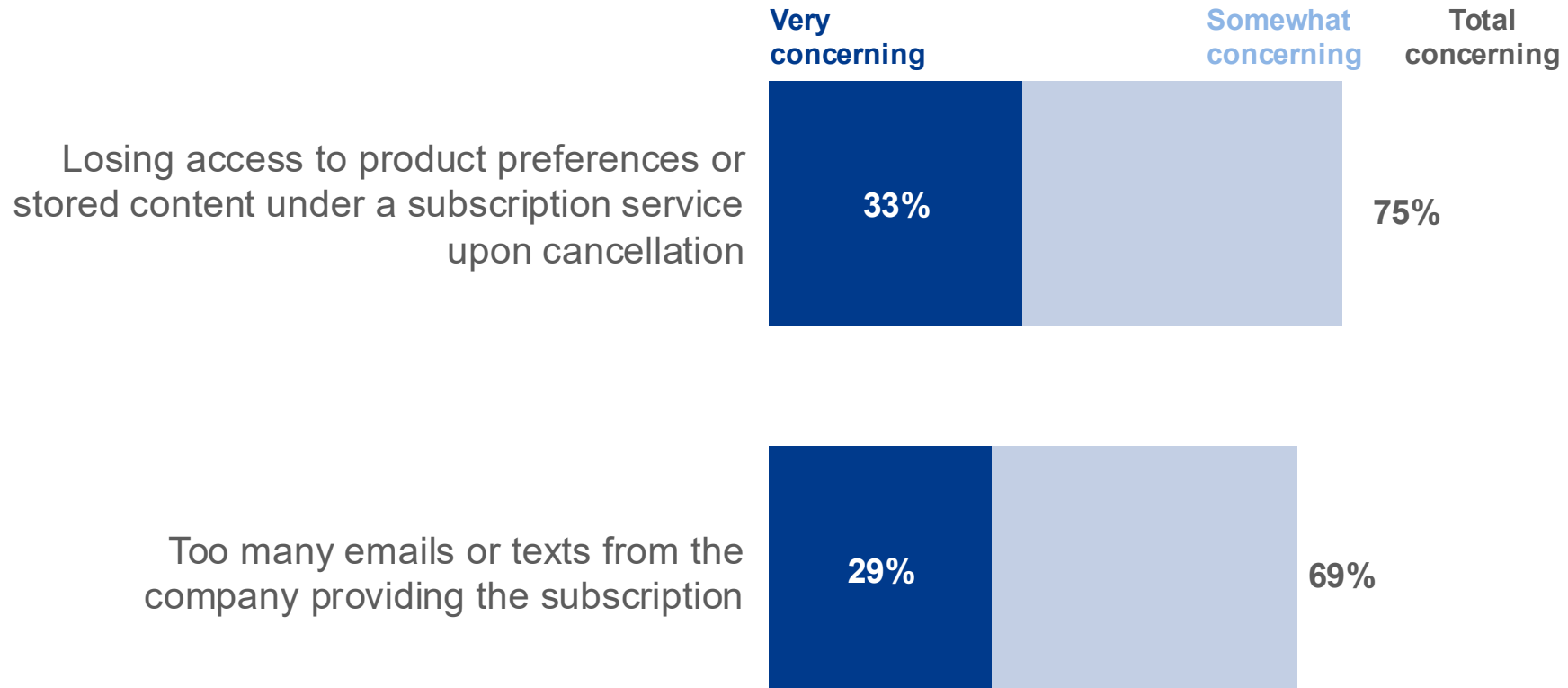
Do you agree or disagree with the following:

“Subscriptions for personal use such as media streaming and music are different from subscriptions for professional tools like photo editing or other online software.”



One-third of consumers are concerned about losing access to stored content.

How concerning is each to you?

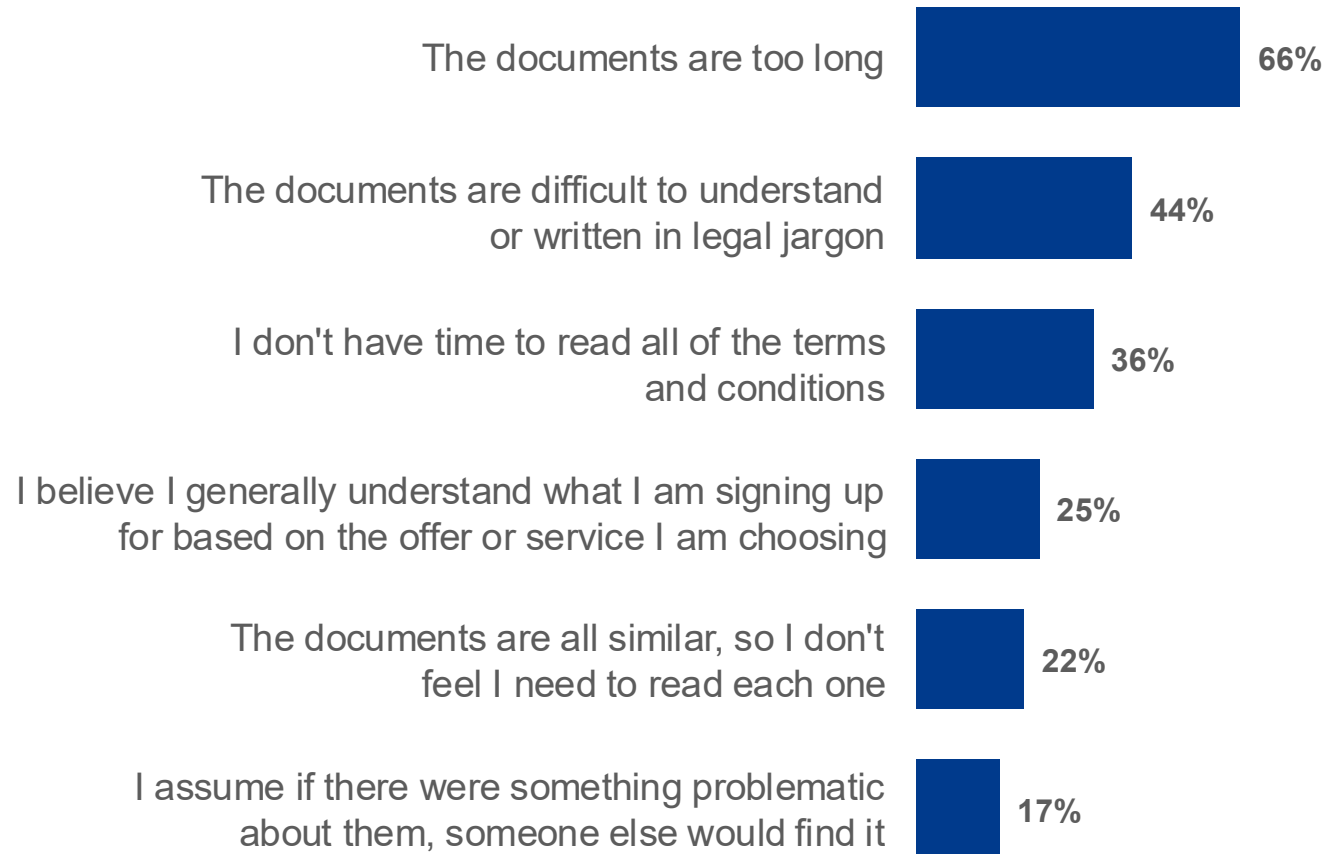


Terms and Conditions

Most do not fully read the full terms and conditions, largely because they are too long or difficult to understand.

Reasons for not fully reading terms and conditions

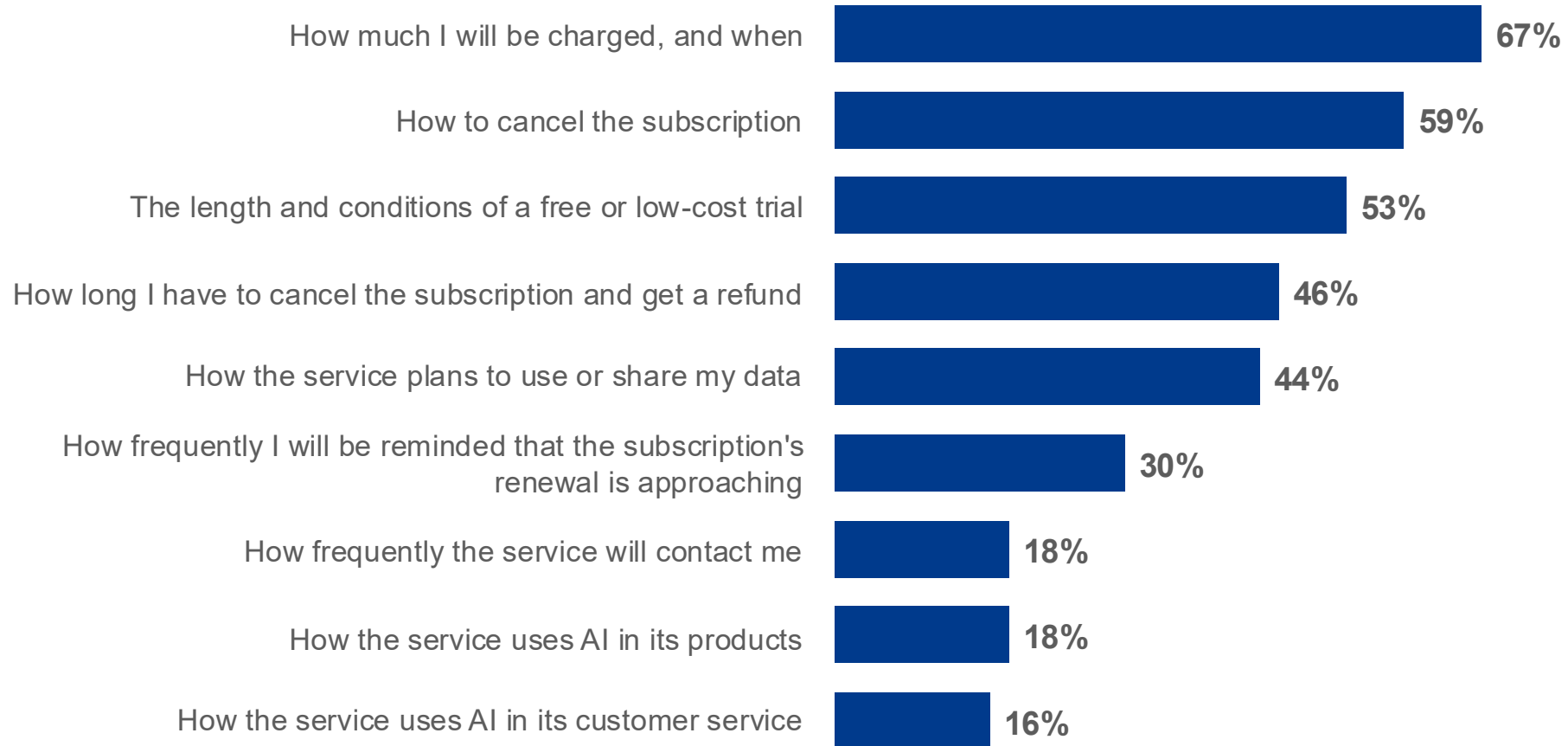
(Among those that indicated they skim or do not read the terms and conditions, n = 397)



Most Australians are looking for how much they will be charged and information on how to cancel.

What information are you primarily looking for when you read or skim the terms and conditions of a subscription?

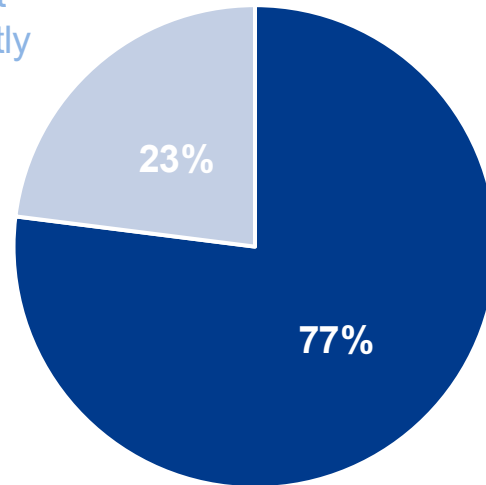
Among those that said they at least skim the terms



Most have a strong preference for a shorter version of the terms and conditions, with a link to the full.

When signing up for a subscription, I would prefer to see...

A longer version of the terms that covers more details like how frequently and when I will be contacted with reminders, even if it's more text.

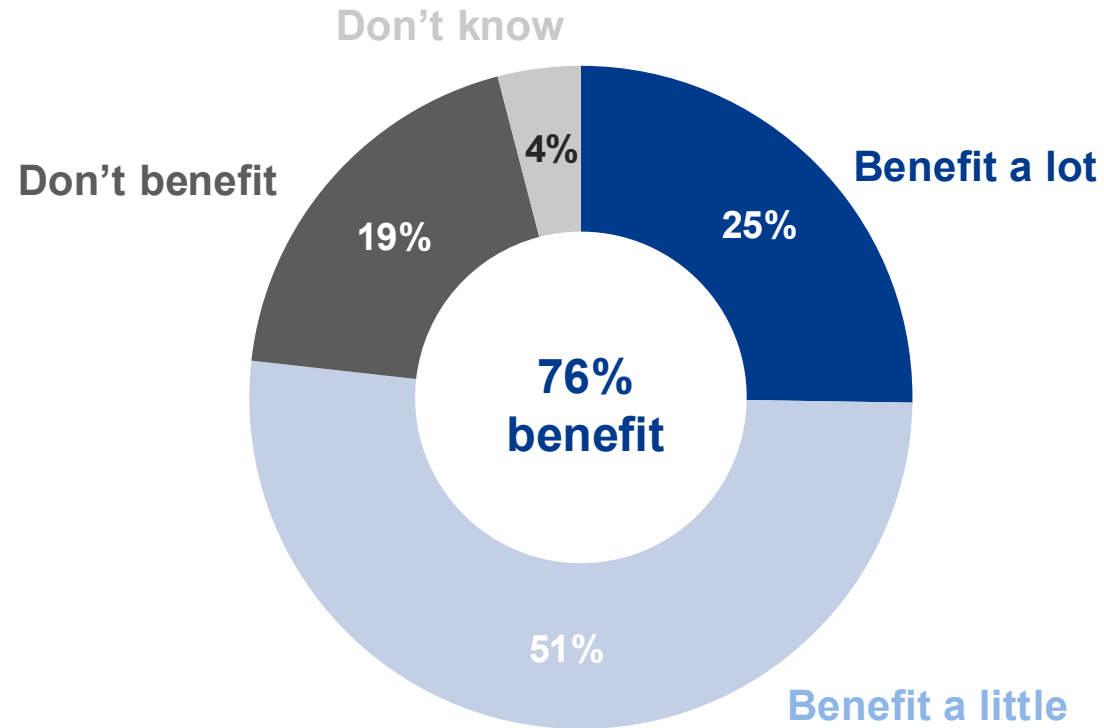


A shorter version of the terms – with a link to the full terms – that covers just the most relevant information like payment terms and how I can cancel, even if it leaves out some details.

Free Trials & Cancelling

Over three-in-four Australians appreciate free trials.

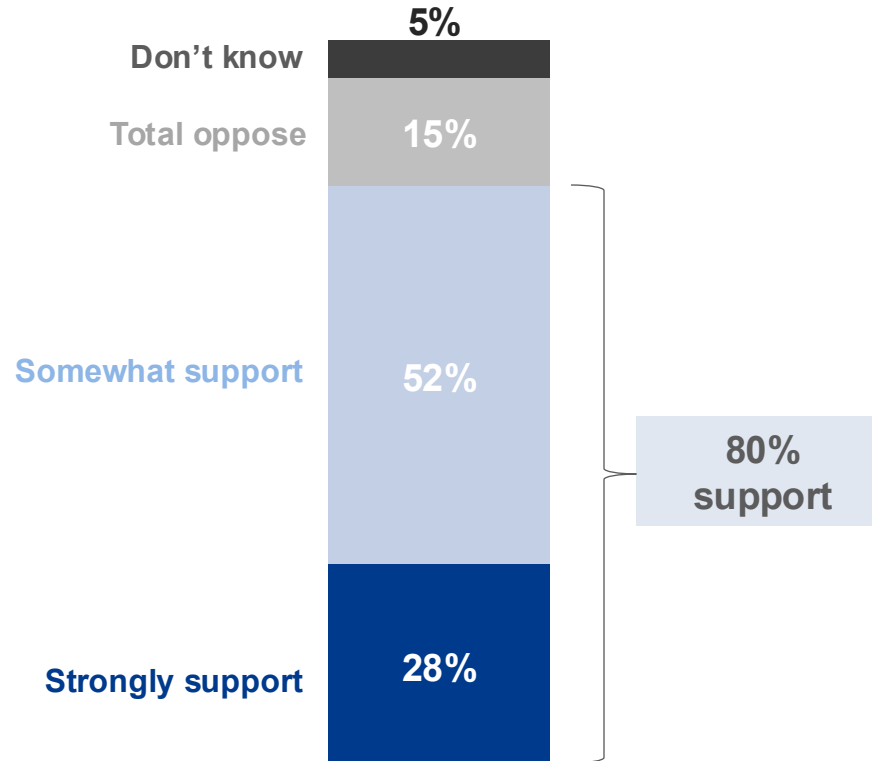
Generally speaking, do you benefit from free trials offered by subscription companies:



The vast majority of Australians support being asked for an email address.

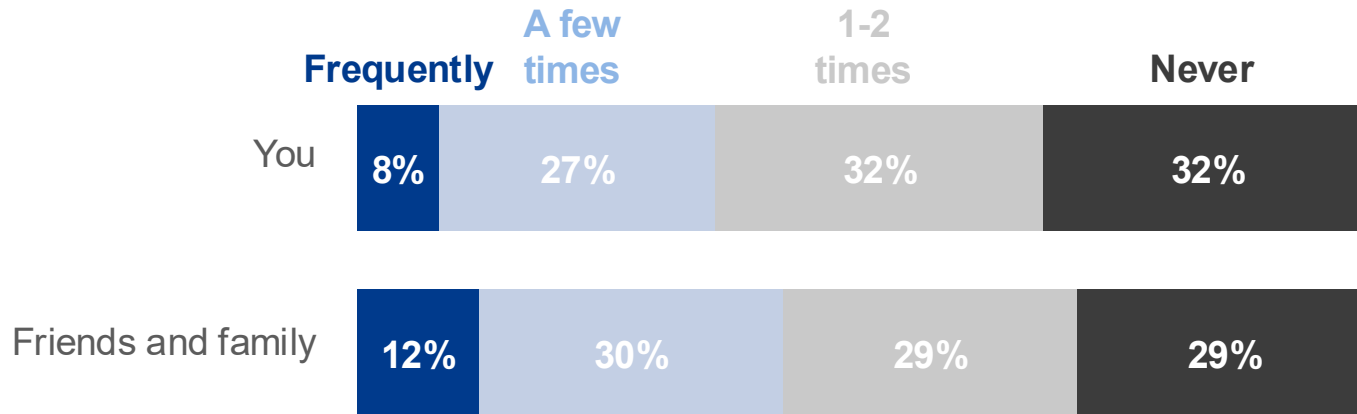
Do you support or oppose the following:

“Being asked for an email address when signing up for a subscription – even a free trial – so that the company can grant you secure access to your account and all the content you may store in it.”



Most Australians admit to bingeing and cancelling, but mostly on subscriptions for digital content only.

Have you ever signed up for a subscription to use a service and intentionally cancelled before the trial period ends?



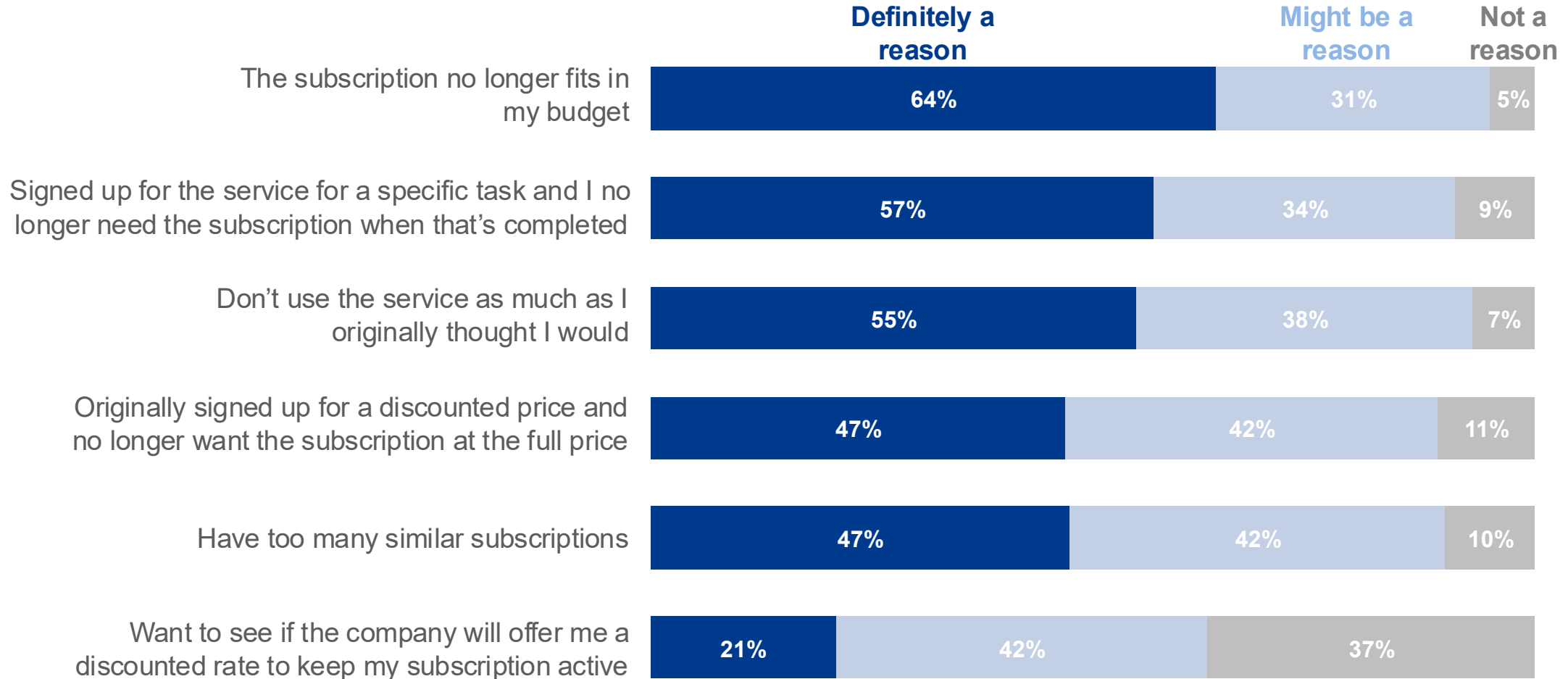
Types of subscriptions done with:

57%
Digital content only

25%
Both digital content and digital services

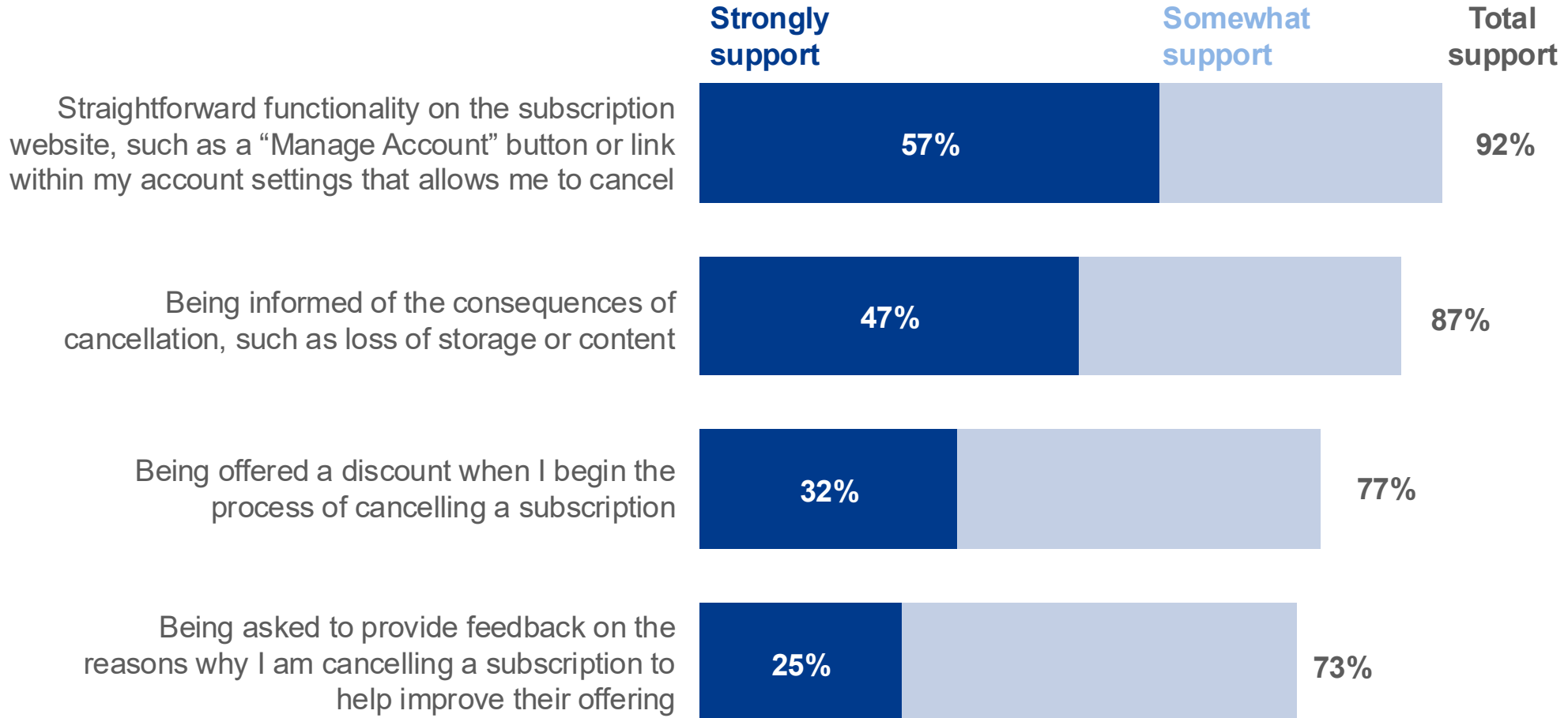
Most would cancel for budgetary reasons or if they no longer need the service; 63% would consider attempting to cancel to get a discount.

Reasons to cancel a subscription



Australians most strongly support straightforward functionality and being informed of the consequences of cancellation.

I would support...

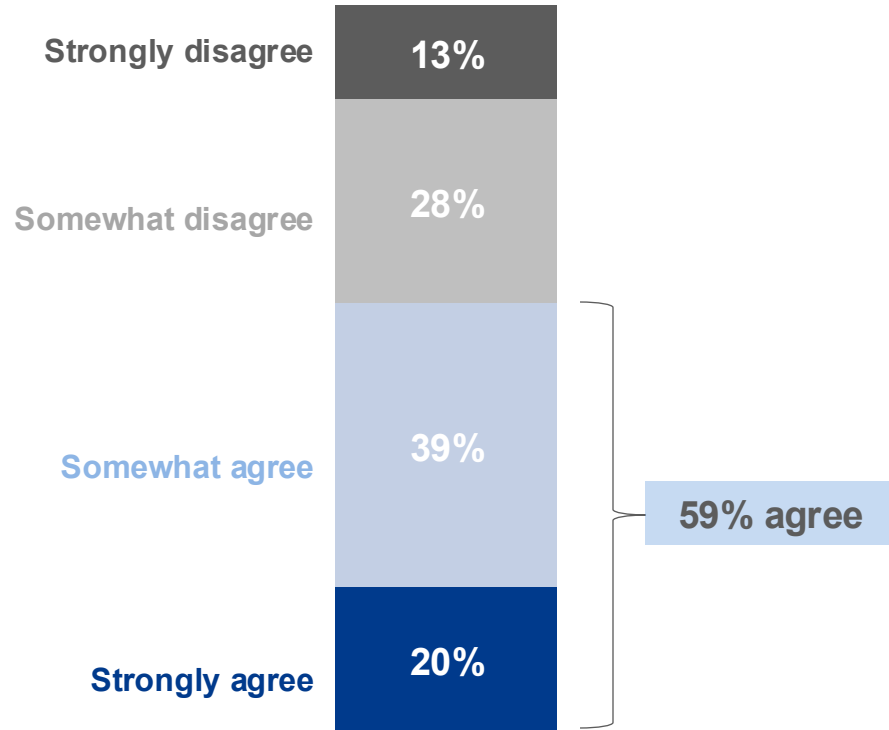


Reminders

A majority of Australians do not want monthly reminders of renewal or charges – even for annual-billed-monthly subscriptions.

Do you agree or disagree with the following:

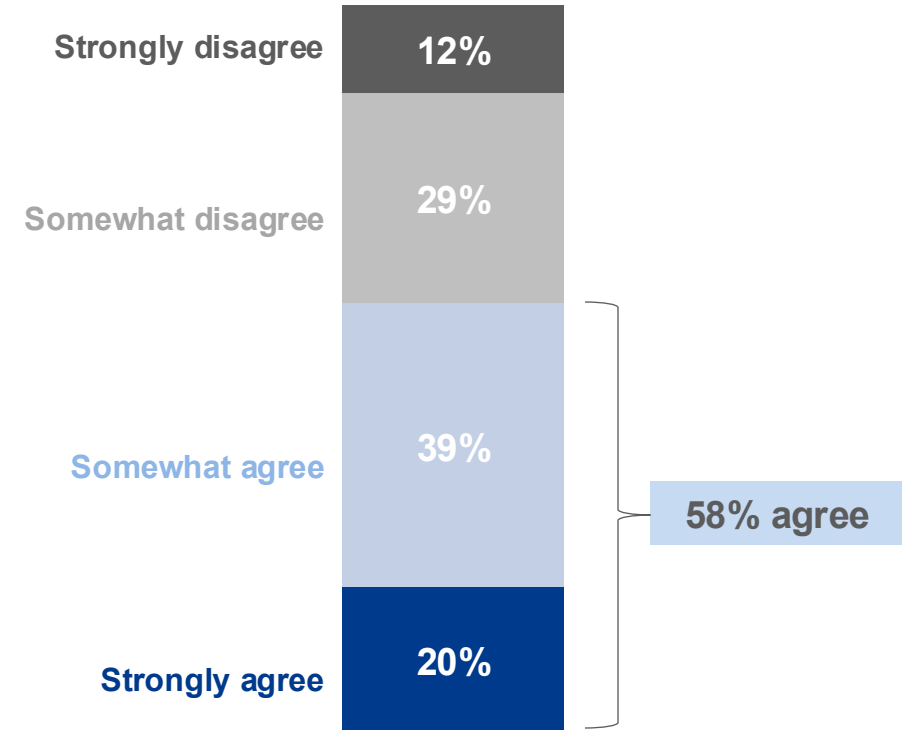
*“When I sign up for a **month-to-month subscription**, I would rather not receive an email every month reminding me of the upcoming renewal.”*



Note: Asked of half

Do you agree or disagree with the following:

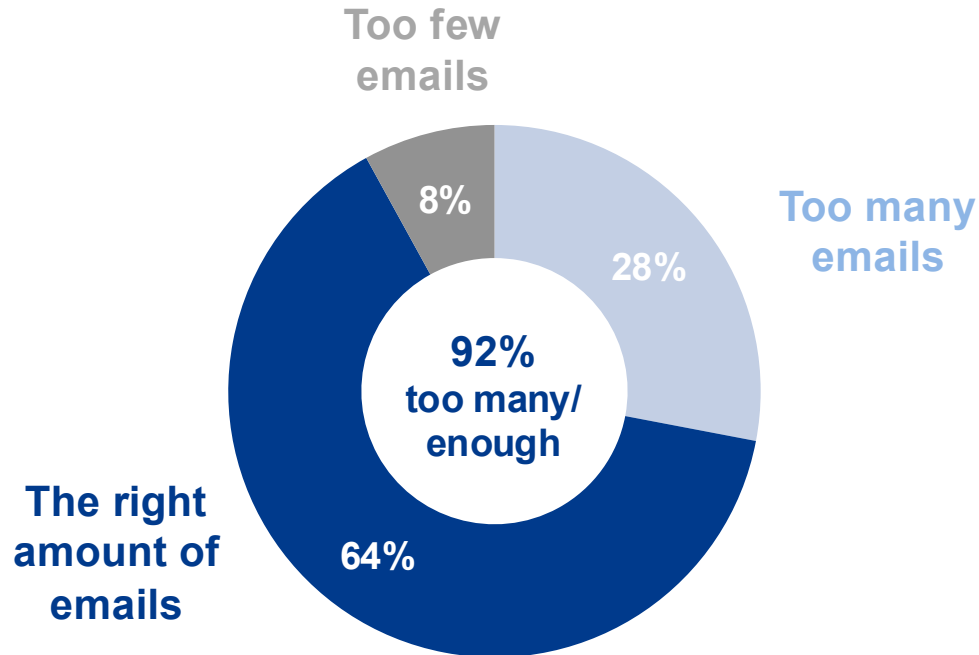
*“When I sign up for a **year-long subscription that I get billed for on a monthly basis**, I would rather not receive an email every single month reminding me of the upcoming charge.”*



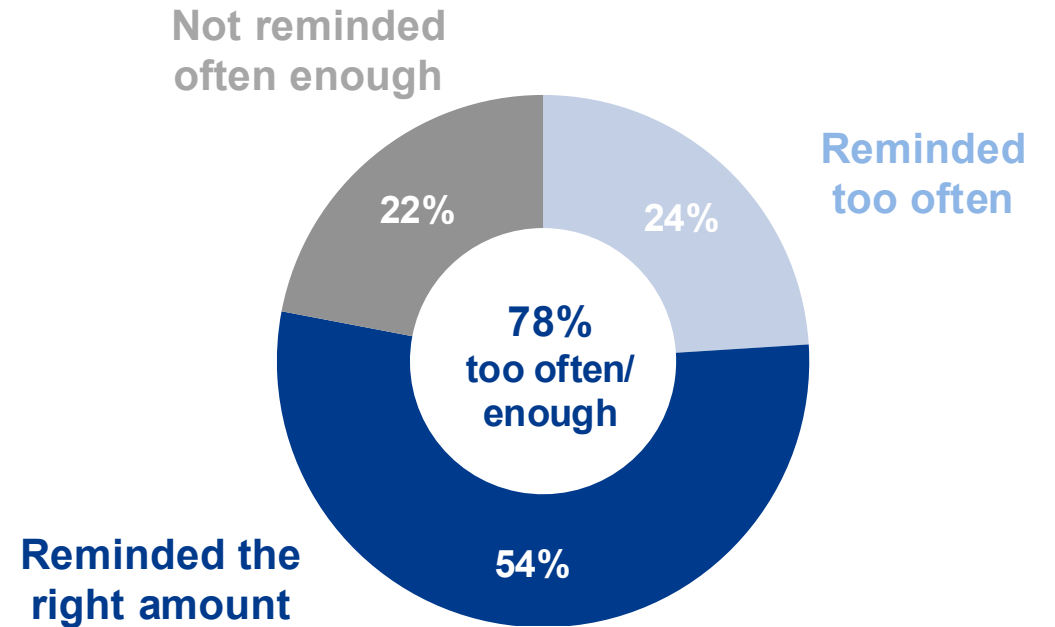
Note: Asked of half

A majority feel they get the right amount – or too many – emails from companies about subscriptions.

When you sign up for a subscription, do you generally feel that the company sends you too many or too few emails about it?

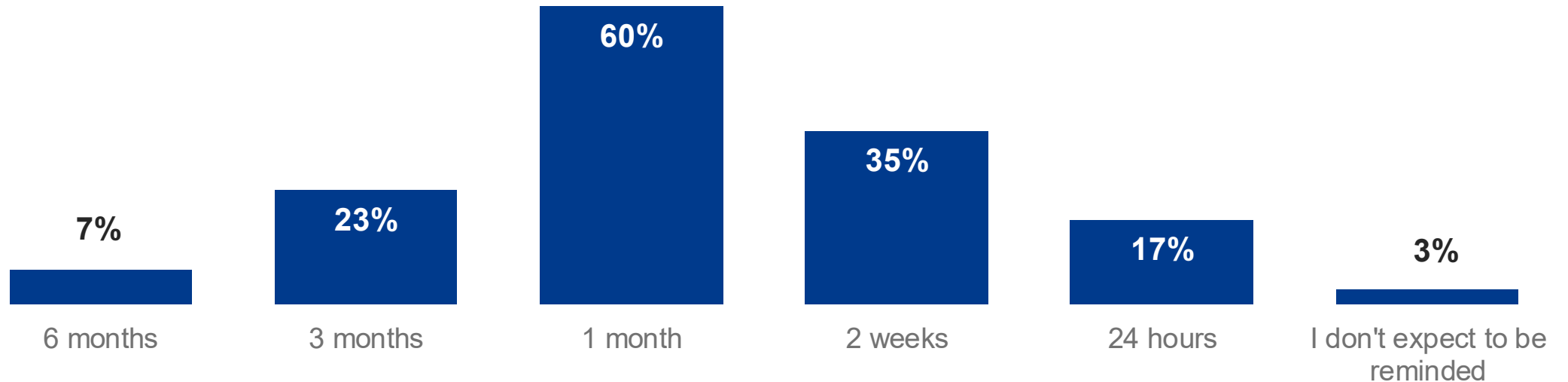


And thinking of your own subscriptions, how do you feel about the frequency of email reminders you receive about upcoming renewal or cancellation deadlines?



Most want to be reminded about an upcoming renewal between 1 month and 2 weeks out.

When do you expect to be reminded about an upcoming renewal for a 12-month subscription?



Thank you.