



# MEMBERS SURVEY

## OCTOBER 2023

[www.abcfriendssa.net.au](http://www.abcfriendssa.net.au)

### INTRODUCTION.

The ABC Friends SA/NT Committee decided to adopt a more inclusive approach to decision making for its activities beyond the opinions of the Committee. To enable this approach, a survey of members was developed to obtain information about the membership age, gender, opinions and suggestions.

It was hoped that the results of the survey would enable members to have the opportunity to be involved in the future directions of ABC Friends. Measuring the outcomes of the survey and implementing the recommendations of the Committee contained within this report may require a future survey which will be anonymous, as this survey was.

## **METHODS.**

Survey Monkey was chosen as the vehicle for the survey on the basis of its utility and the options it provided for:

- 1) delivery of the survey
- 2) anonymity of respondents
- 3) presentation of responses.

A subgroup of the Committee developed the survey instrument and trialled it internally before taking it into the field.

The email addresses of SA/NT members were obtained from Nation Builder (a software program designed to manage complex demographic data and facilitate large email blasts).

Survey Monkey then distributed the survey to 318 members using the sender email address of [sa@abcfriends.net.au](mailto:sa@abcfriends.net.au) on the 18th August 2023. The survey was also announced on social media on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023 with a link provided.

There was no end date set to the survey initially, but a decision was made to close the survey on the 25 September 2023 after receiving only 1 additional response in the previous 9 days.

The quantitative data were to be presented descriptively.

The qualitative data were thematically analysed and allocated to response themes by the Committee subgroup and presented to the whole Committee to develop the recommendations in this report.

## **RESULTS.**

### **Survey Response rates:**

Survey email invitations sent = 318; 5 bounced.

Of the 313 invitations delivered; 226 were opened and 87 unopened.

So, 226/313 opened invitations (72%) and 87/313 (28%) were unopened. The response rate of opened invitations was  $79/226 = 35\%$ ; and the response rate of total invitations was  $79/313 = 25\%$ .

### Quantitative Data:

The data trends will be described for the responders, and the supporting data is illustrated sequentially in the pages containing histograms / tables.

#### Survey participants demographics.

The responder member age distribution indicates that over 70% are in the 66 - 80 age group. (Q 1)

About 70% of responders were of female gender (Q 2)

#### Member's perception of the role of ABC Friends SA/NT

(Q 5) Should seek to influence ABC programs/commentary: Often - 37%; occasionally - 37%.

(Q 6) Engage with Federal & State SA MPs: Often -75%; occasionally – 22%.

#### Membership activities – levels of interest.

(Q 8) Online panel discussion about media issues: High - 14%; medium interest - 30%.

(Q 9) Face-to- face panel discussion about media issues:

High - 16%; medium- 24%.

(Q 10) Social event activities such as Quiz nights: High - 8%; medium - 32%.

(Q 11) Advocacy and activism activities: High - 18%; medium - 43%.

#### Members Communication style preferences.

(Q 12) The National E newsletter was thought to be informative by about 65 % of responders.

(Q 13) 2023 AGM attendance: Attend - 10%; undecided -36%.

(Q14) Heard / read about the recent ABC 5- year plan: - 37%.

(Q15) Heard / read commentary/discussion/opinion about the ABC 5- year plan: 34%.

(Q 16) Preference for mode of information receipt: Email - 92%.

### Qualitative Data:

Below are broad topics/categories suggested for each question with response numbers and a few direct quotes from the survey.

**Q 3** What do you think the primary role of ABC Friends is? (77 responses, 2 skipped):

#### Support ABC 31

*"To support the ABC in its endeavours as a public broadcaster."*

*"Coordinate support for the ABC"*

*"Provide support to the ABC and free balanced, informed broadcasting"*

#### Support ABC Funding 20

*"Support for ABC so that it is able to provide relevant programs to the broader community and to fulfil its charter independent of outside interference. To ensure that it is funded adequately."*

*"Advocating for funding for continued excellence of the ABC."*

#### Advocate for ABC 18

*"Advocate for a strong public broadcaster"*

*"Advocating for the ABC by explaining its role in society, highlighting attacks on its independence, but also advocating on behalf of the consumers of ABC services."*

#### Support ABC by informing public of ABC issues 14

*"To work to keep people aware of the wide-ranging roles of this public, citizen-owned national broadcaster in such a way that they recognise its immense value as a counter weight to the seriously Murdoch or Stokes controlled commercial media."*

*"To inform people of the needs of the ABC for more funding to enable it to completely fulfil its charter and to lobby politicians on this issue."*

#### Support ABC independence 13

*"Protect and Fight for independent ABC"*

*"To advocate on behalf of the ABC for its independence and appropriate funding."*

#### Support ABC by lobbying politicians 8

*"To lobby and advocate for ongoing and realistic funding...not subject to political whim... guaranteed...and to be alert for political interference."*

#### Support ABC to fulfil its Charter 5

*"Supporting the ABC as far as possible to implement its Charter. Lobbying for the funds to do so."*

**Q 4.** What do you see as other roles of ABC Friends?

(Answered by 56, skipped by 23)

## **CATEGORIES THAT ALIGN WITH THE VISION OF ABC FRIENDS**

### **Lobbying 14**

*"To lobby politicians regarding nonpartisan and appropriately qualified people to be appointed to the board"*

*"To lobby Government to improve funding for the ABC and to help it to maintain it's journalistic" independence"*

*"Advocacy for public broadcasting, particularly with a younger demographic and lobbying for programs and funding"*

### **Providing constructive feedback to ABC 6**

*"Feeding back to ABC management our thoughts, ideas and criticisms"*

*"To be a friendly critic of ABC policy and programming"*

*"Critique and applause (for ABC)"*

### **Promotion of the ABC 8**

*"To promote the ABC as a respected provider of unbiased content"*

*"Spread awareness within the community of the importance of the ABC"*

*"Advocacy for public broadcasting particularly with a younger demographic"*

### **Communicating with members about the ABC 5**

*"Keeping the membership up to date on the inside story of what is happening when attempts are made to downgrade the ABC"*

*To create a network of knowledgeable "friends" to speak up on behalf of the ABC"*

*"Informing from behind the scenes"*

### **Forums for members with guest speakers 5**

*"Gatherings with ABC guest speakers"*

*"Allow for socialising"*

*"...Group events with ABCF panels, livestreams, quiz nights, regular non-committee meetings"*

### **Campaigns 3**

*"Organise campaigns regarding the ABC (eg Petitions, letter-boxing and sign waving)"*

*"A group of like-minded people with the ability to activate (eg Rally email campaign) as needed"*

*"Inform, educate and activate its own members"*

### CATEGORIES OUTSIDE THE STATED VISION OF ABC FRIENDS

#### Influencing ABC programming 5

*"To promote ABC programs"*

*"To ensure a variety of materials are available to people of all demographics"*

*"To keep up to date with current and proposed content"*

#### Challenging false claims of other media organisations 3

*"Challenging false claims by other media"*

*"To agitate for more regulation of media and the Murdoch press"*

#### Informing members about programs (1)

*"To advise of changes to programming and content"*

**Q 7.** What activities would you be interested in that ABC Friends could offer?  
(Answered: 56.)

#### Political campaigns—direct person; letters; petitions; rallies 15

*"Lobbying relevant politicians"*

*" Supporting the ABC friend's activities. Lobbying government"*

*"Campaigns/Petitions, University-based events, south Australian community events (e.g. writer's week, or country shows), panels/meetings"*

#### Social events; discussions; speaker forums etc. (1online)14

*"A forum for ideas and critiques of the ABC"*

*"I notice that activities are city centric. I don't live in a city suburb and I don't like to drive at night"*

*"Meetings and informal gatherings among ourselves and with local ABC staff and broadcasters. These could be both face to face and online."*

#### Feedback to ABC on programs: defend presenters 5

*"Keep us free from commercials"*

*"Reviewing of programs"*

*"A regular opportunity to comment on the quality and fairness of ABC programs"*

#### Attend community events to publicise ABC & Friends 3

*"Possibly engage with wider community at local events to let the world know "Friends" exist."* Fact finding; research; surveys

2 *"opinion and surveys"*

**Q 16** What information do you need about the ABC?

(Answered by 42, skipped by 37) It appeared that many respondents were confused about this question and they interpreted it as what did they want to know about ABC Friends.

Responses like (4):

*“Organising and campaigning information, when required”*

*“Advice about programs that might interest our members”*

*“Meaning involved – attend or help prepare and take active part in a panel or sim”*

*More information about ABCF regarding youth and regional people”*

**Funding 7**

*“Any funding issues or job cuts”*

*“Any information about its current and future funding”*

*“Relative costs of transmission versus operational and changes over time that affect the production of Australian stories”*

**Programming 5**

*“Programming”*

*“Programming, especially the arts and why so much trashy American content”*

*“More information about programming”*

**Decision making by management 7**

*“Criteria for employing or dismissing staff. Budget for the Arts”*

*“Who is in senior positions and their qualifications for that”*

*“Need to know when it’s under threat from the Government”*

**Strategies for future transitions 8**

*“How its intending to develop with the changing demographics and the changing technological landscape”*

*“What this focus on digital will mean for those of us who are old and using machines that might not be adaptable”*

*“Threats and opportunities. How it is like and different from equivalent organisations in other nations:*

**Maintaining independence 1**

*“What will it take to keep it Government funded. No advertising media body”*

### Potential for demise of services 3

*"Does the ABC plan indicate the demise of broadcasting. Concerned about the axing of local news services"*

*"I need reassurance that the ABC isn't going to disappear into mainly digital format"*

### Impact on the regions 2

*"Future programming, especially for the regions"*

*"Anything to do with the effects of management decisions or Federal funding that negatively impacts regional, remote or rural content delivery"*

**Q 18. Thank you for helping the ABC Friends SA/ NT Committee begin to understand some of the Members thoughts and needs. Please feel free to add any further comment regarding your experiences of ABC Friends SA/NT or this survey. (27 responses,52 skipped).**

### Positive feedback to ABC Friends 9

*"A BIG Thank you to ABC Friends for all you do"*

*" find Update valuable, informative and extremely interesting"*

*" I am heartened by the support given by ABC Friends to the organization."*

### Programs 6

*"Good to be informed as it feels like the ABC is falling apart and free to air is mostly repeats and evenings on 22 are starting to look like Little America"*

*"I'm a RN devotee though Adelaide 891 is vital for local political news and discussions in normal times ,while essential and life-saving in disasters like fire /flood times. FM Classic is there to heal the rough information --but it has lost many of its commentators which is a huge loss."*

### Critical Feedback to ABC Friends 4

*"The SA/NT Committee seems to have no presence in the NT"*

*"I like the recent initiatives of the SA ABC Friends committee but succession planning needs to be high priority too"*

*"I worry about my financial status at times. Can we get a better reminder process"*

*"ABC Friends has not been active enough in opposing the 5-year plan"*

### Face-to-Face AGM 3

*"dinner with a guest speaker or forum, quiz night, rallies, face to face state AGM"*

*"I prefer face to face meetings, etc. rather than online."*



*“I am disappointed that the AGM will be held on line, and I won't have the opportunity to meet and engage with other ABC supporters”.*

#### Online/Zoom AGM 1

*“I would like to be more involved but live remotely so the forthcoming zoom AGM is a good idea.”*

#### ABC BOARD 1

*“I'd also like the ABC to be a statutory authority safe from the actions of Ministers of Communication able to put on the board those not only with no commitment to public broadcasting but with little understanding of what it means to be the broadcaster needed in so many ways across the continent”*

#### **DISCUSSION.**

The survey results have stimulated the Committee to review their planning of activities for next year, and an outline of the Committees plans for the coming year will be presented in the following Committee Recommendations section.

The response rate of 35% to the opened survey is above the range of “good between 5-30%” quoted by a range of sources. The older age preponderance of the members probably reflects the changes as social media has been overtaking traditional media, particularly in the younger age groups. The ABC 5-year plan is attempting to manage this problem. Here in the SA/NT Friends Committee we are driving a social media presence, hoping to inspire more of the younger generation to become members or supporters of the ABC and be heard at a national level on issues such as ABC funding.

The female dominance in our member group may have a number of explanations, and is helpful as the Committee aims to continue to build its diversity and representation.

The responses to what should be the primary role of ABC Friends is consistently supporting the ABC through funding, advocacy and political lobbying as well as being a vehicle to provide the general public with information on issues affecting the ABC.

The members see other roles for the Friends aside from those mentioned above as ones such as promoting the ABC, communicating issues to members and participating in forums and campaigns. The suggestions of influencing ABC programming and challenging false claims of other media will be considered by the Committee.

It was heartening to see the range of activities responders thought the Friends could offer – political campaigns with political lobbying, letters, petitions, rallies; social events with speakers; attending community events to publicise the ABC.

These activities will require the active participation of the membership. A coming activity will be at Adelaide Writers Week where a strong member turnout wearing ABC Tee shirts would have a positive impact.

Unfortunately, we did not include a question in the survey as to whether the members live in a rural or urban setting, as these settings do have different needs. In time, with the roll out of some new activities we may again be asking for your feedback in a further survey.

The section on “What information do you need about the ABC” was directed to things like the ABC 5- year plan (we have included a link for information about that at the end of this report).

Some of the feedback provided in the final survey reinforce areas covered above with programming, face-to-face meetings, but with a rural member wanting zoom. With technology today we can accommodate both needs, as occurred at the AGM this year. The issue about the lack of NT membership will be addressed in the Recommendations section to follow.

### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS.**

- Social media sharing to include more of the content in question about “What do you need from the ABC F”?
- Invite membership for a subgroup of the committee specifically to coordinate political campaigning such as, petitions and other suggested actions in the survey responses.
- The committee have an open meeting, perhaps twice a year that members can attend which could include a social focus.
- Offer an annual event which could be planned by the committee or subgroup with a combined focus on campaigning, information sharing, guest speakers and social connection.
- Issues such as ABC management decisions and programming, the changing media environment etc require the Committee to come up with recommendations as to how we respond to these issues eg; pushing the development of a communication channel between ABC Friends National and ABC Management to ensure the aims of each are consistent and compatible?
- The Friends could also explore nationally how we can aid the ABC by feedback on programming, rather than the ABC relying on commercial surveys for that feedback?

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

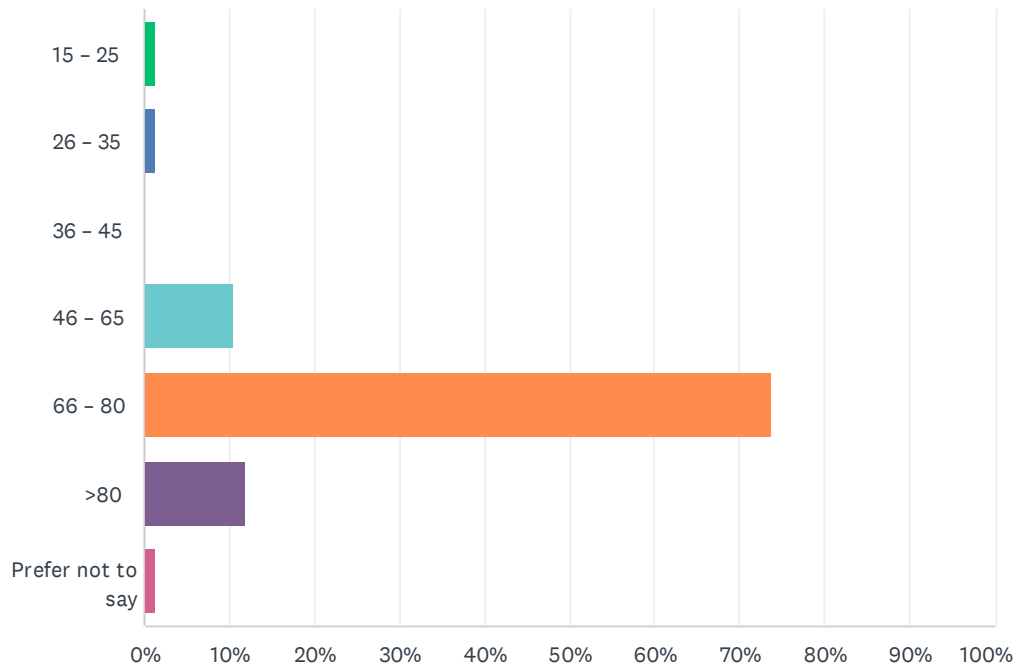
The Committee thanks the responding members for their feedback, opinions and suggestions.

You have stimulated our thinking with your ideas. We are very interested to hear your views on the Committee recommendations please. Any member can email their views to [sa@abcfriends.net.au](mailto:sa@abcfriends.net.au).

Any member wanting to read a summary of the ABC 5 year plan, which contains links to the background and detail should go to <https://about.abc.net.au/press-releases/abc-five-year-plan-2023-2028-an-essential-part-of-daily-life-for-all-australians/>

## Q1 Your age range ?

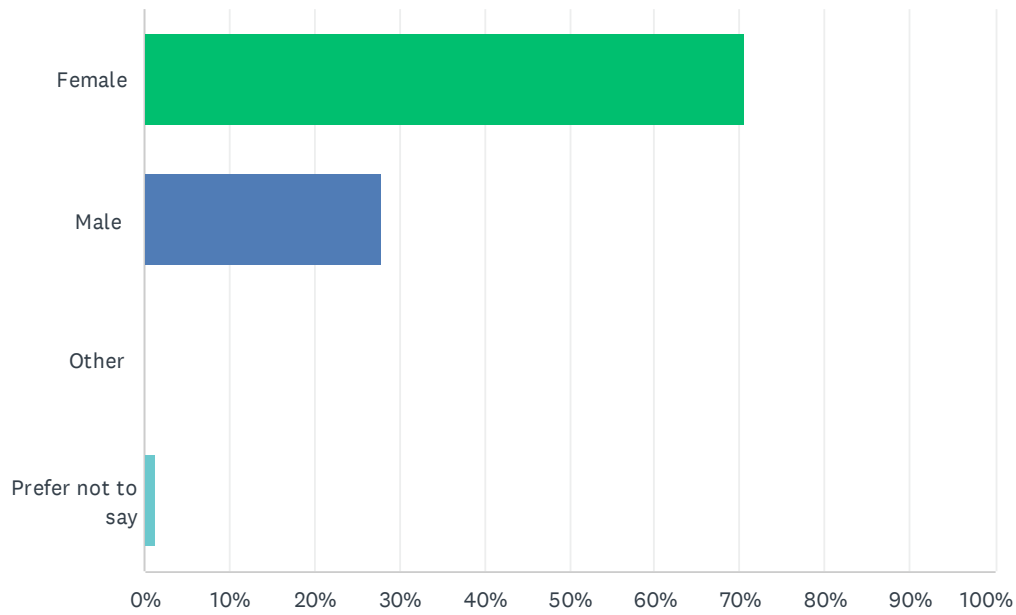
Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
15 - 25	1.32%	1
26 - 35	1.32%	1
36 - 45	0.00%	0
46 - 65	10.53%	8
66 - 80	73.68%	56
>80	11.84%	9
Prefer not to say	1.32%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>76</b>

## Q2 Your gender ?

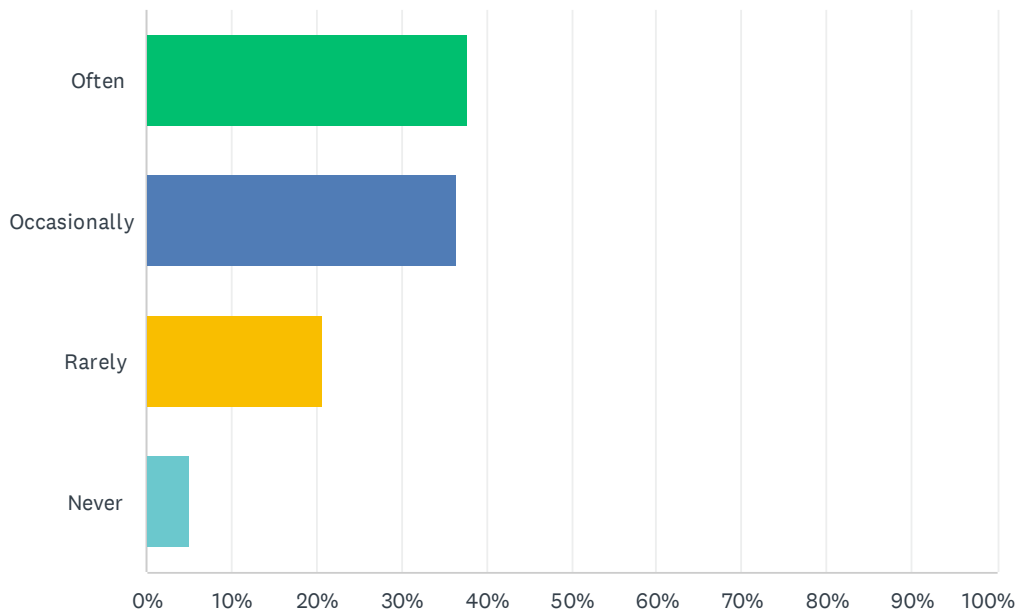
Answered: 75 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female	70.67%	53
Male	28.00%	21
Other	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	1.33%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>75</b>

### Q5 To what extent do you feel ABC Friends should seek to influence ABC programs/ commentary?

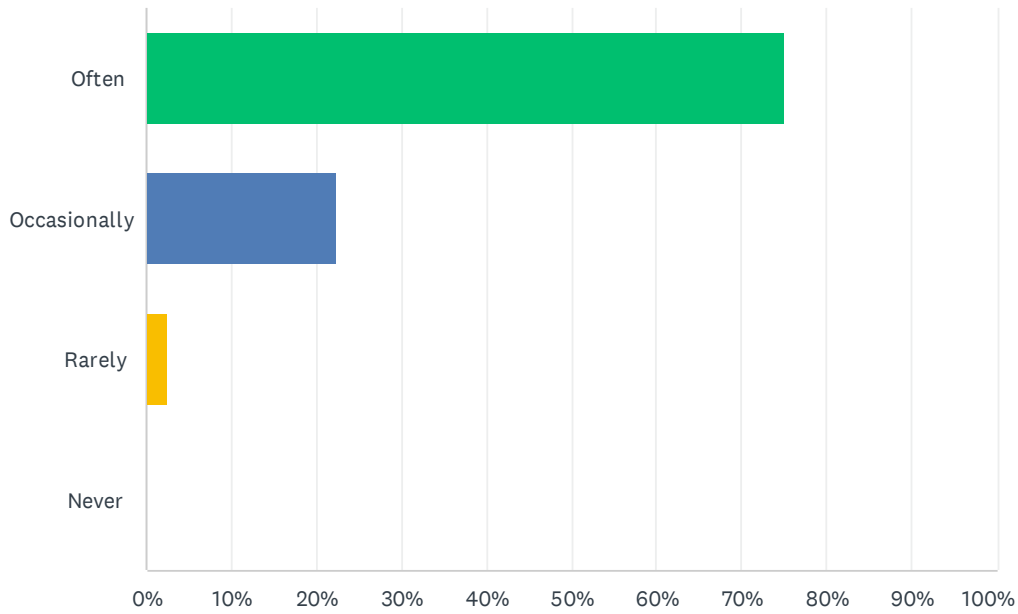
Answered: 77 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Often	37.66%	29
Occasionally	36.36%	28
Rarely	20.78%	16
Never	5.19%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>77</b>

## Q6 To what extent do you feel ABC Friends should seek to engage with Federal and State SA members of Parliament ?

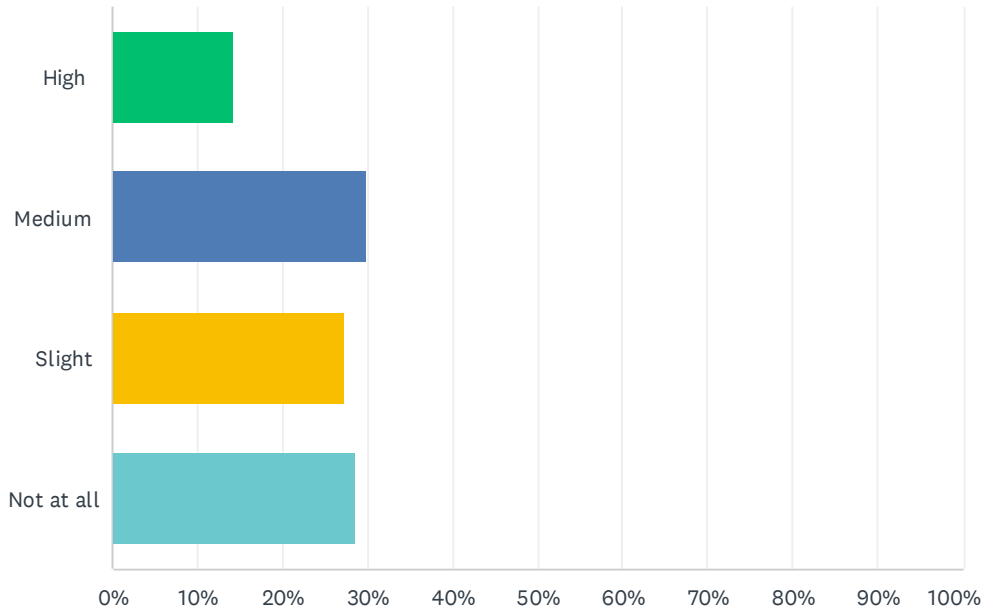
Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Often	75.00%	57
Occasionally	22.37%	17
Rarely	2.63%	2
Never	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>76</b>

## Q8 To what extent would you be interested in being involved in ABC Friends activities such as online panel discussion about national/SA media issues ?

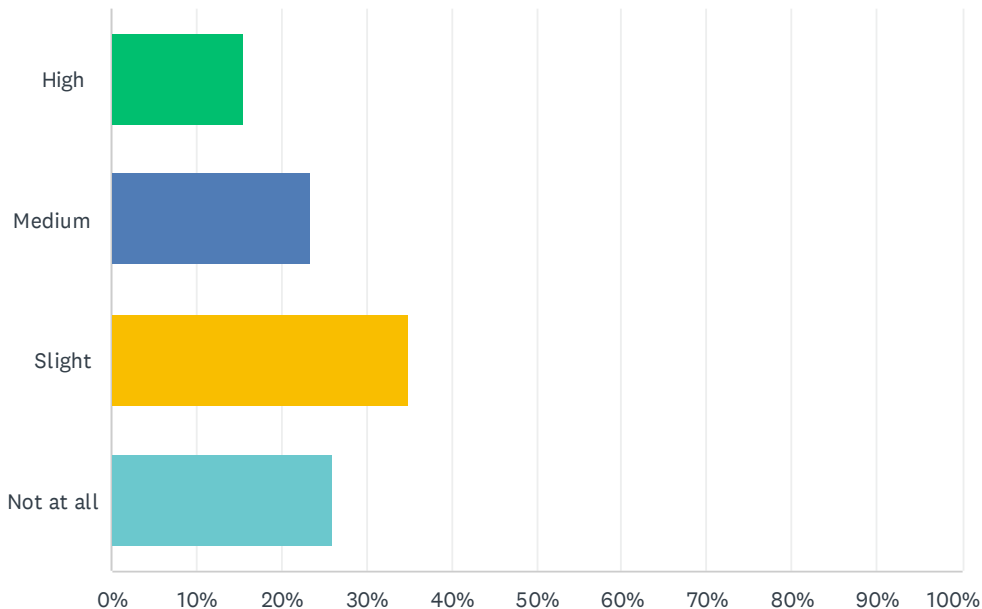
Answered: 77 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
High	14.29%	11
Medium	29.87%	23
Slight	27.27%	21
Not at all	28.57%	22
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>77</b>

### Q9 To what extent would you be interested in being involved in ABC Friends activities such as face-to-face panel discussion about national/SA media issues ?

Answered: 77 Skipped: 0

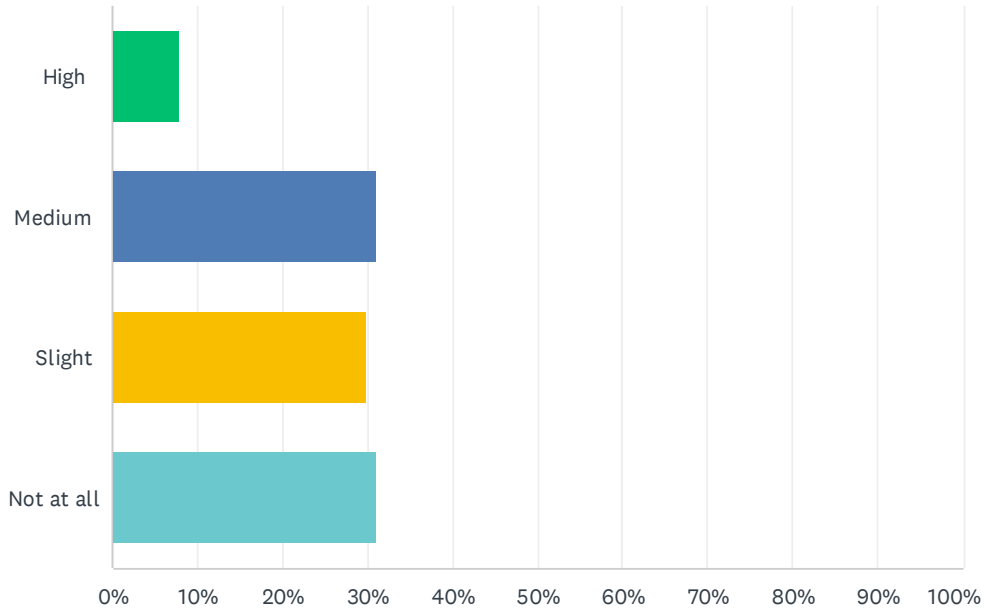


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
High	15.58%	12
Medium	23.38%	18
Slight	35.06%	27
Not at all	25.97%	20
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>77</b>



## Q10 To what extent would you be interested being involved in ABC Friends activities such as social events eg Quiz nights?

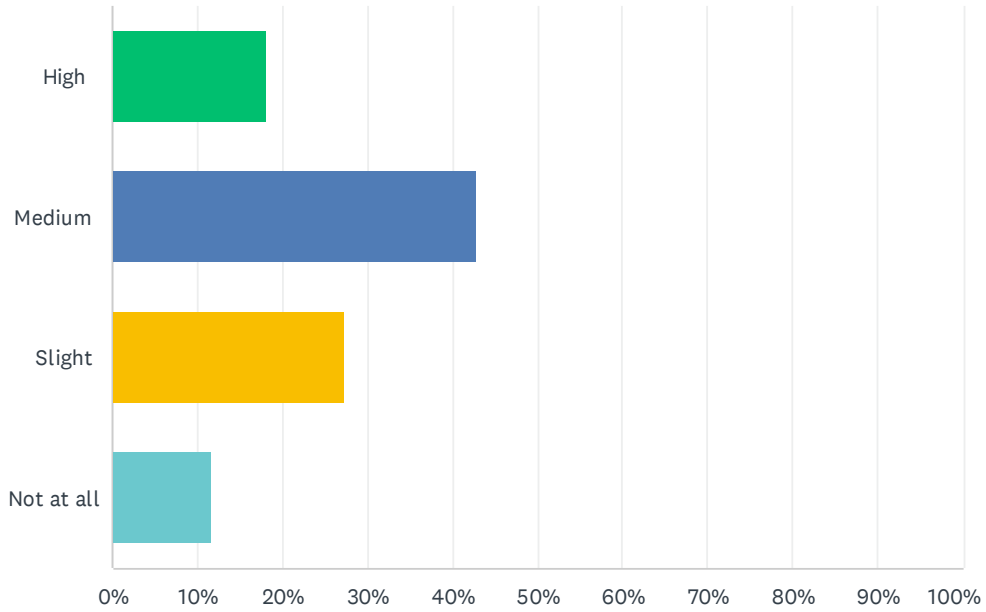
Answered: 77 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
High	7.79%	6
Medium	31.17%	24
Slight	29.87%	23
Not at all	31.17%	24
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>77</b>

## Q11 To what extent would you be interested being involved in ABC Friends activities such as advocacy and activism activities?

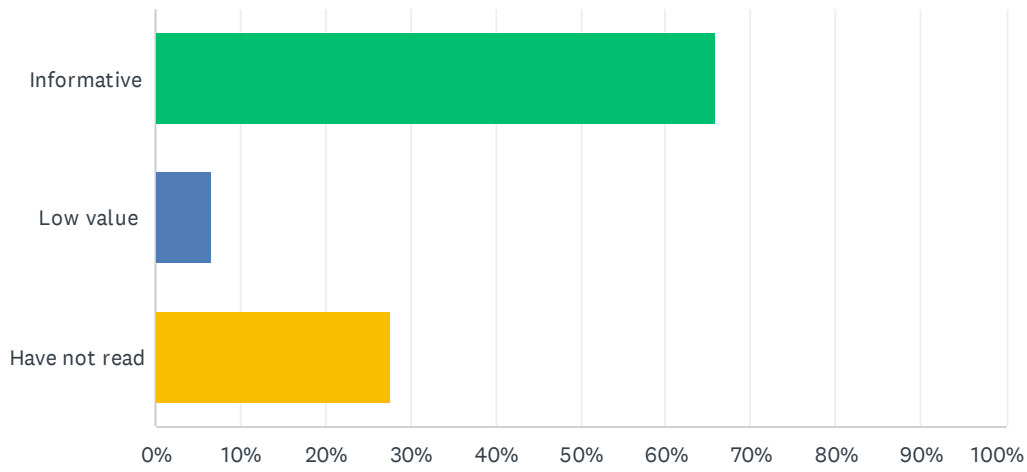
Answered: 77 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
High	18.18%	14
Medium	42.86%	33
Slight	27.27%	21
Not at all	11.69%	9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>77</b>

## Q12 What is your opinion of the National E Newsletter ?

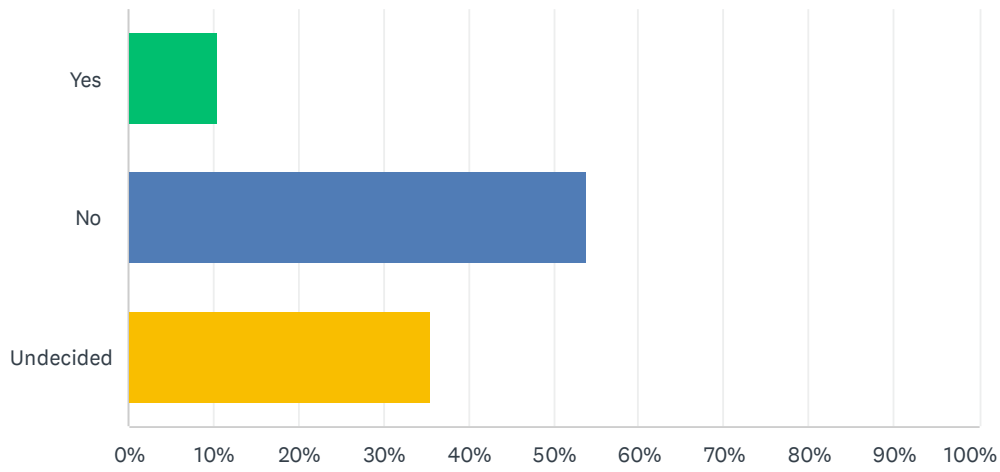
Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Informative	65.79%	50
Low value	6.58%	5
Have not read	27.63%	21
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>76</b>

## Q13 Will you attend the SA Friends AGM in Sept 2023 ?

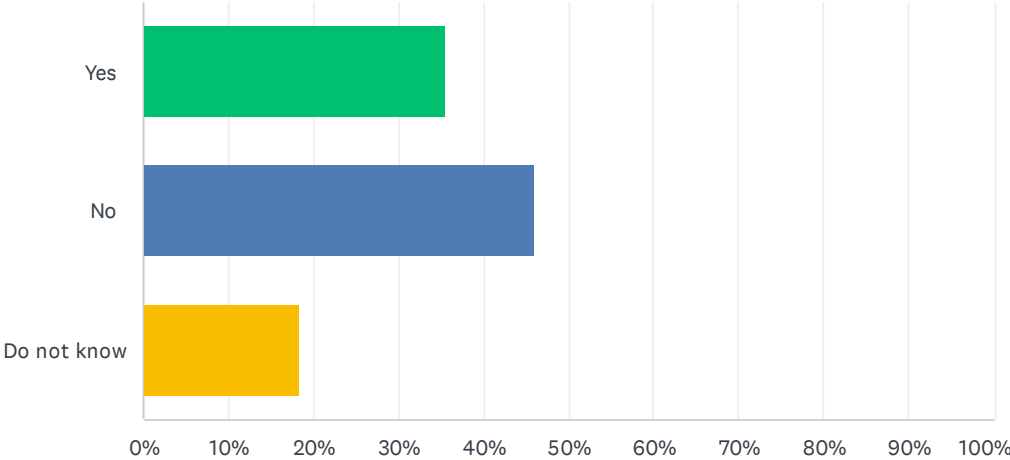
Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	10.53%	8
No	53.95%	41
Undecided	35.53%	27
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>76</b>

# Q14 Have you read or heard about the recent ABC 5 year plan?

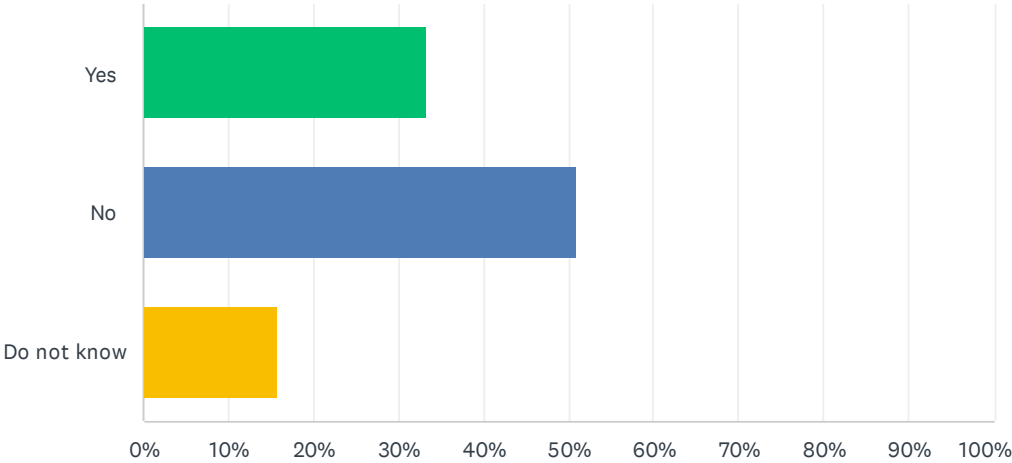
Answered: 76 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	35.53%	27
No	46.05%	35
Do not know	18.42%	14
TOTAL		76

### Q15 If yes to 14, have you read or heard commentary/discussion/opinion about the ABC 5 year plan ?

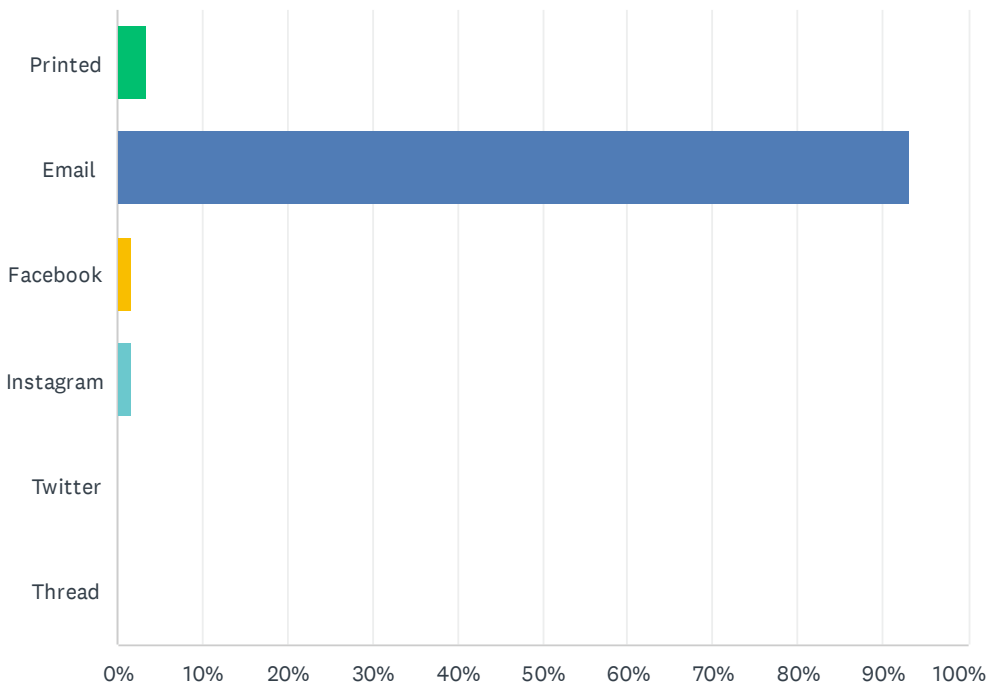
Answered: 51 Skipped: 26



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		33.33%	17
No		50.98%	26
Do not know		15.69%	8
TOTAL			51

### Q17 How would you like to receive such information ? ( skip if no response to previous question)

Answered: 58 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Printed	3.45%	2
Email	93.10%	54
Facebook	1.72%	1
Instagram	1.72%	1
Twitter	0.00%	0
Thread	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>58</b>