

AUSTRALIA

PLAYS  
25





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# FOREWORD

by Professor Jeffrey Brand

The 2025 Australia Plays report is the 11th in a series of studies that IGEA and Bond University have published since 2005. The purpose of this research has been to provide evidence and encourage conversation about who among us plays video games, why we play, how we play and what we think of this dynamic and often breathtaking medium.

For two decades, we have seen the rapid maturation of the video games audience. While the early reports in this series surprised many in our community that video games were so popular – and the typical player was an adult – today the reality that video games are not only popular, but that they are popular for everyone at every age has been well documented through this research.

We have long argued that video games give rise to digital fluency. The digital economy is flourishing, if not because of video games creating capacity, then at least in part because they contribute. We have also argued that the technologies underpinning video games has been an important part of innovation, giving rise to new capabilities.

Trends we have been surprised by this year include the bias toward cooperative play among younger players and competitive play by older players. We have been impressed by parents' clarity about controls, ratings, and the value of games for their children's learning. It also seemed from quantitative and qualitative findings that social interactions and creativity are both motivations for and outcomes from video game playing. Finally, we are sensitive to evidence that the number of us who play video games and the amount of time we spend playing them are limited by the natural amenity and outdoors lifestyle in Australia, and by the practical value that is discovered when Australia Plays.

# Key findings

**75%**  
of parents have  
rules around play

Over  
**70%**  
of parents are aware  
of family controls and  
in-game controls

**74%** of Australian  
households have  
**2 OR MORE GAME DEVICES**  
with the most popular being a console

**82%** UP FROM  
**81%**  
of all Australians play  
video games

**51%** UP FROM  
**48%**  
**FEMALE**  
more women and  
girls are playing than  
ever before

The average age of video  
game players in Australia is

**35 YEARS**

**81%** of all players in  
Australia are  
**AGED 18+**

**89%**  
of parents play  
with their children to  
connect as a family





Australians play games to...



Australians play games for personal growth to:

1. Create feelings of enjoyment
2. Bring joy
3. Stimulate the mind

**77%**   
of Australians play video games with others

 **27%**  
of Australians have made new friends through playing games

Australians play games for mental wellbeing to assist in:

1. Building resilience
2. Managing stress
3. Building self-confidence



## AUSTRALIAN PARENTS...

...play games with children because:

1. Games are a fun way for the family to connect
2. Games provide a way to spend time together
3. A child asks their parent to play games with them



... let their children play games because:

1. It's a fun way to learn
2. They can improve problem solving skills
3. To encourage creativity

## Australian video game players' TOP GENRE CHOICES:

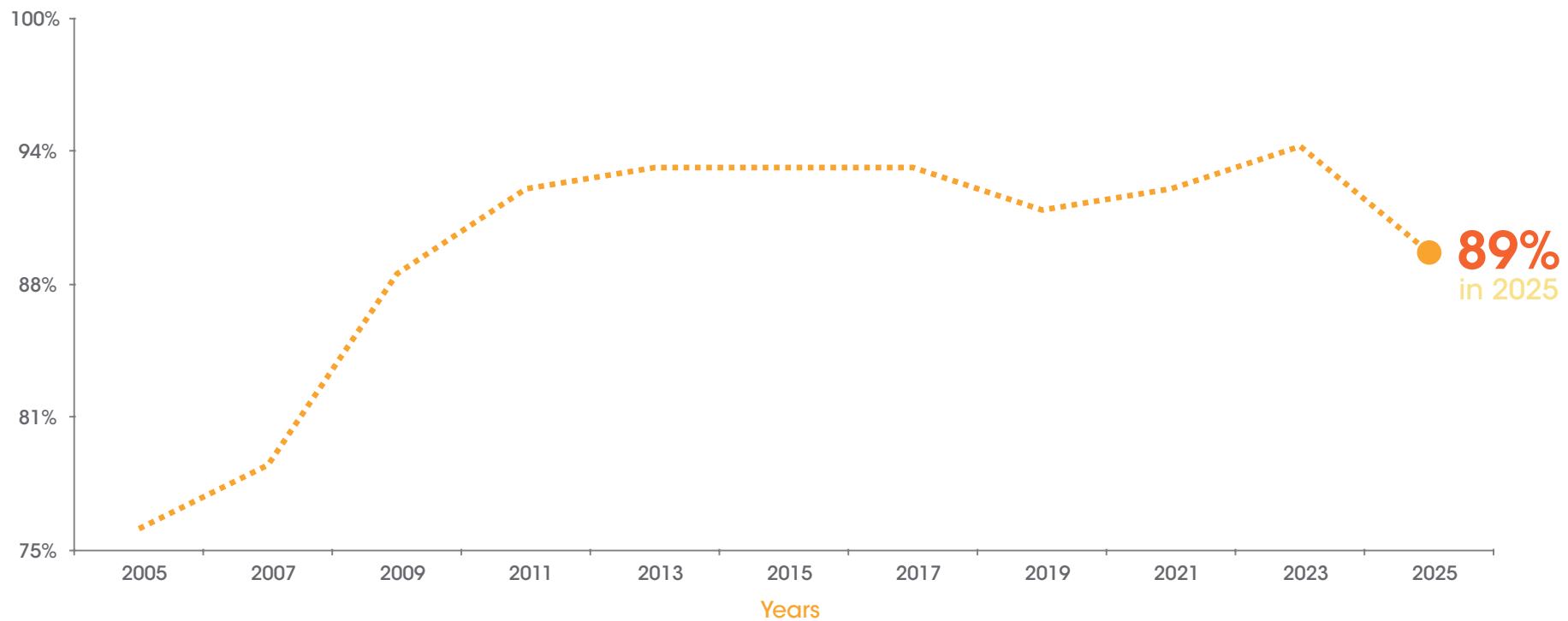


1. ACTION/ADVENTURE
2. PUZZLE
3. SHOOTER & SPORT

# Australia Plays Video Games

## Game households over time

Video games are played in almost nine out of ten Australian households. A home with at least one device on which video games are played is considered a video-gaming household. Although we have reported minor variations over time due to sampling, the result has been a constant within the margin of error for the past 15 years.



**82%** of Australians play video games

The average time they've spent playing video games is **14 years**

“

*To me, play—especially in the form of video games—is more than just entertainment. It's a way to connect, compete, and grow. As someone who thrives on strategy and social interaction, playing video games means engaging in experiences that challenge my mind while allowing me to bond with others. Whether it's teaming up with new players online or revisiting nostalgic co-op games with my younger siblings or cousins, gaming is a social bridge that brings generations together. I grew up playing games with family members, and those memories shaped how I see play today: it's quality time, laughter, and a shared adventure. Now, as an adult, I find video games also serve a deeper purpose—they help sharpen my problem-solving skills, improve reaction time, and enhance strategic thinking. So, for me, playing isn't about zoning out—it's about tuning in: to my instincts, to the people I care about, and to a world that constantly offers new challenges to overcome.*

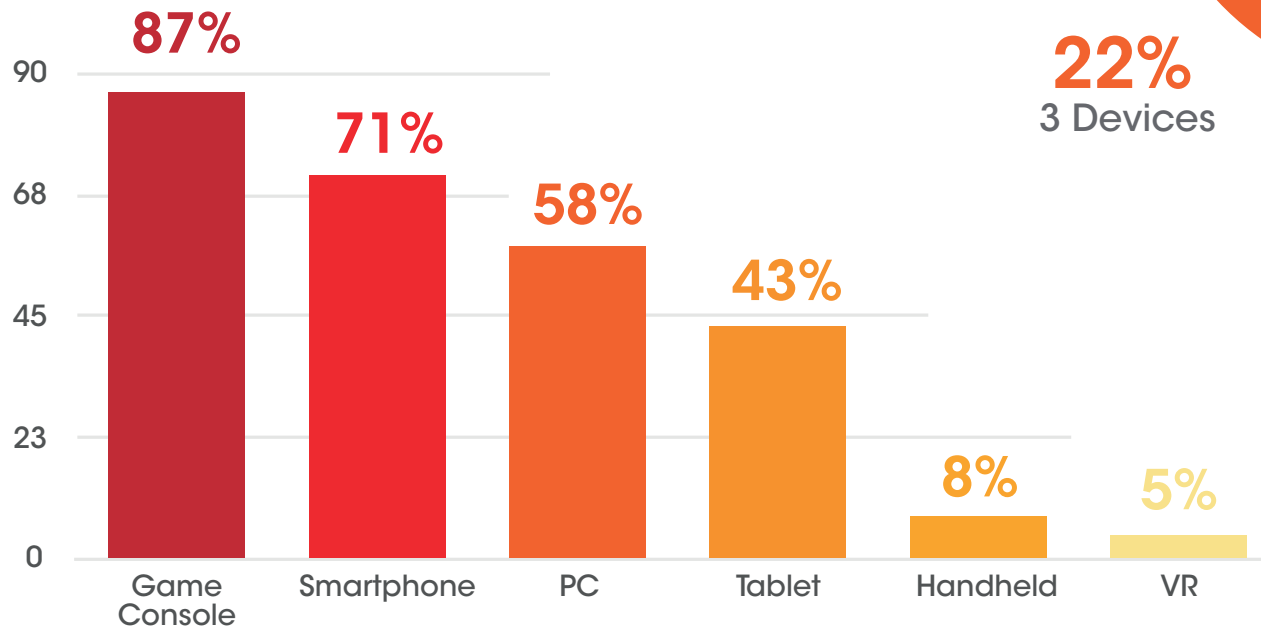
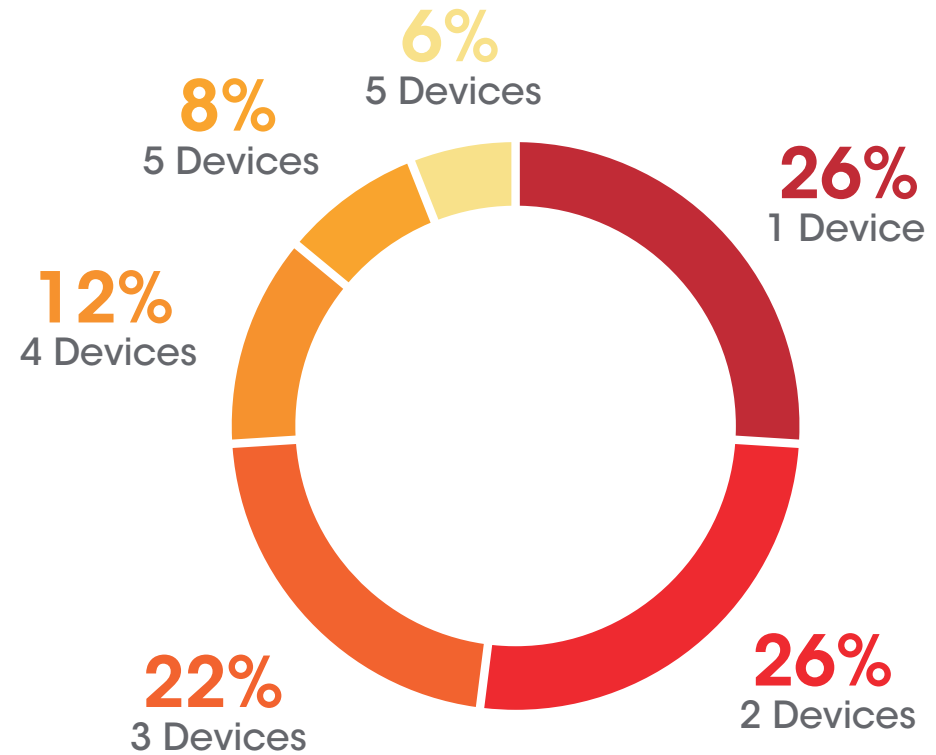
”

Age 33 Male. Parent. NSW.



## Number of game devices per household (%)

Most Australian game households have two or more devices for playing video games; almost half have three or more game devices.



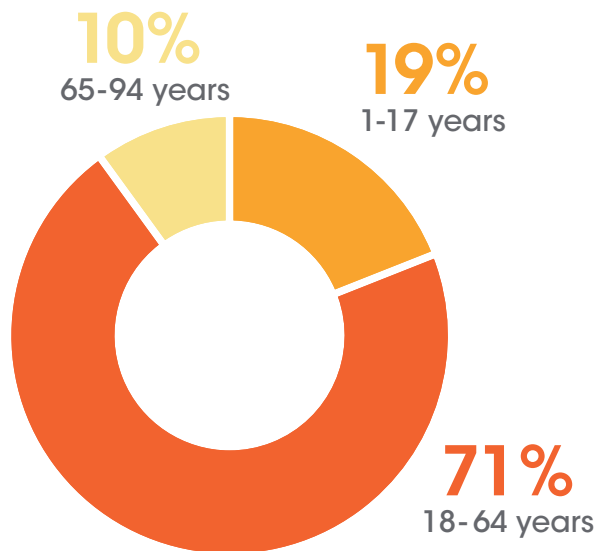
## Types of game devices in households (%)

Taking all brands and platforms together, dedicated game consoles represent the largest group of devices, followed by mobile phones and PCs.

## Average player age

The average age of Australians who play video games has steadily risen over the years, reflecting both the growing number of players and the ageing of existing ones. However, this growth has begun to level out as players' average age draws closer to that of the broader Australian population. Since the 2023 report, the average age of video game players has risen slightly by a few months, but remains at

**35 years in 2025.**

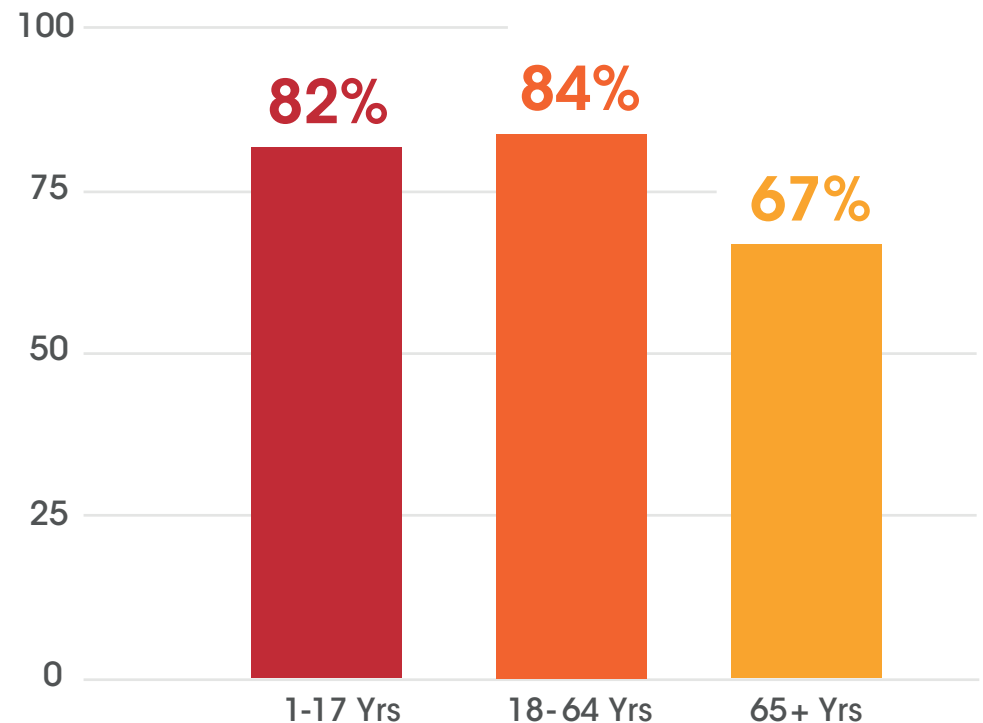


## Age proportion of all players (%)

Contrary to common perception, children are not the primary audience for video games. Of all Australians who play, 71% are working-age adults, while 19% are children and 10% are older adults of retirement age.

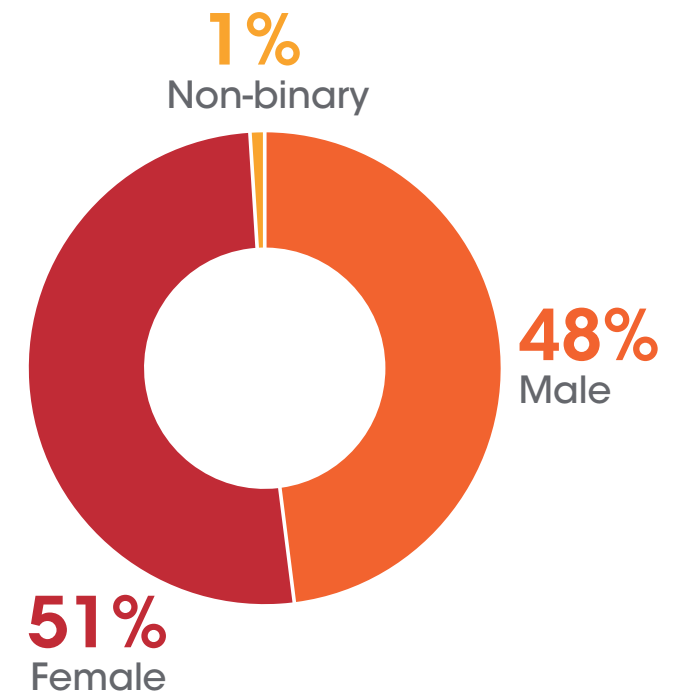
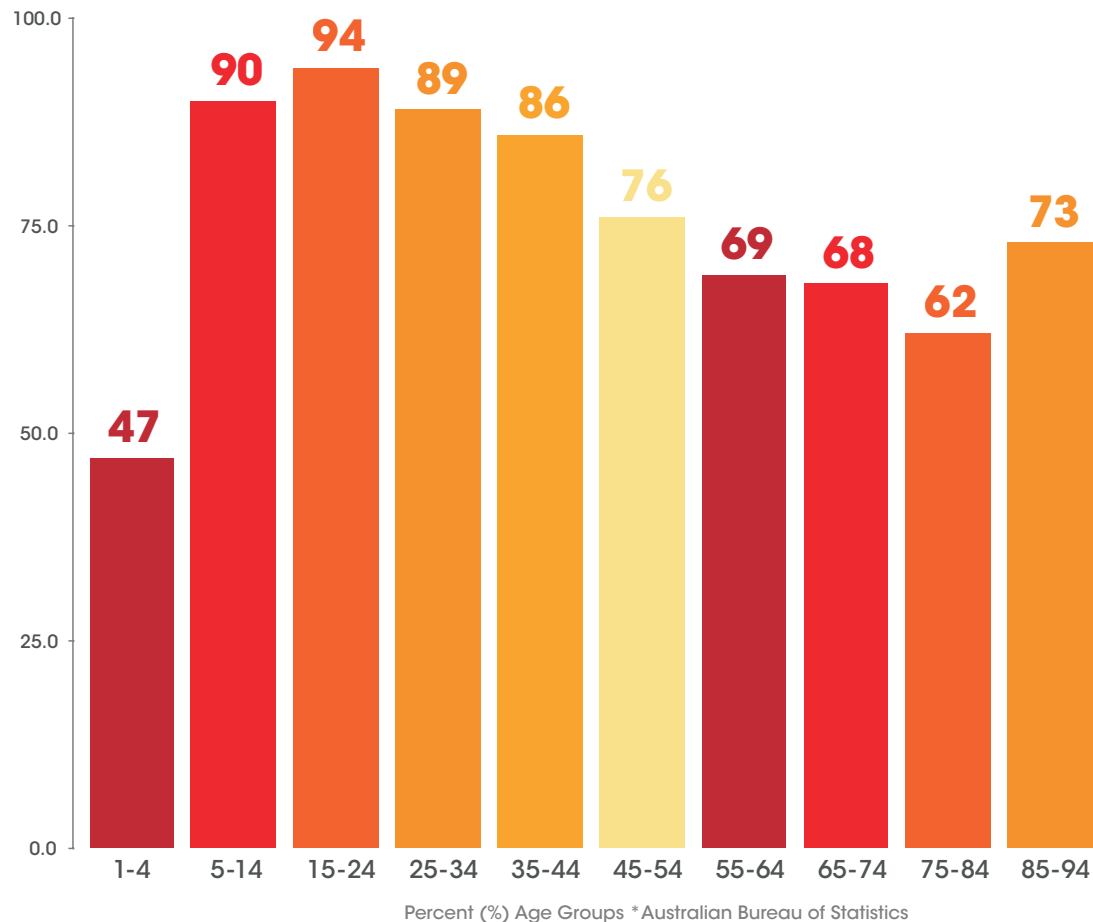
## Age category of players (%)

When grouped into broad categories, working-age adults have the highest proportion of players, with 84% playing video games. Notably, even two-thirds of retirement-age adults are game players.



## Proportion of players within age categories (%)

Broken down into Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) age bands, the age group with the highest proportion of its sub-population that plays is 94%. Notably, more adults aged 85 and older play than children aged 1-4.



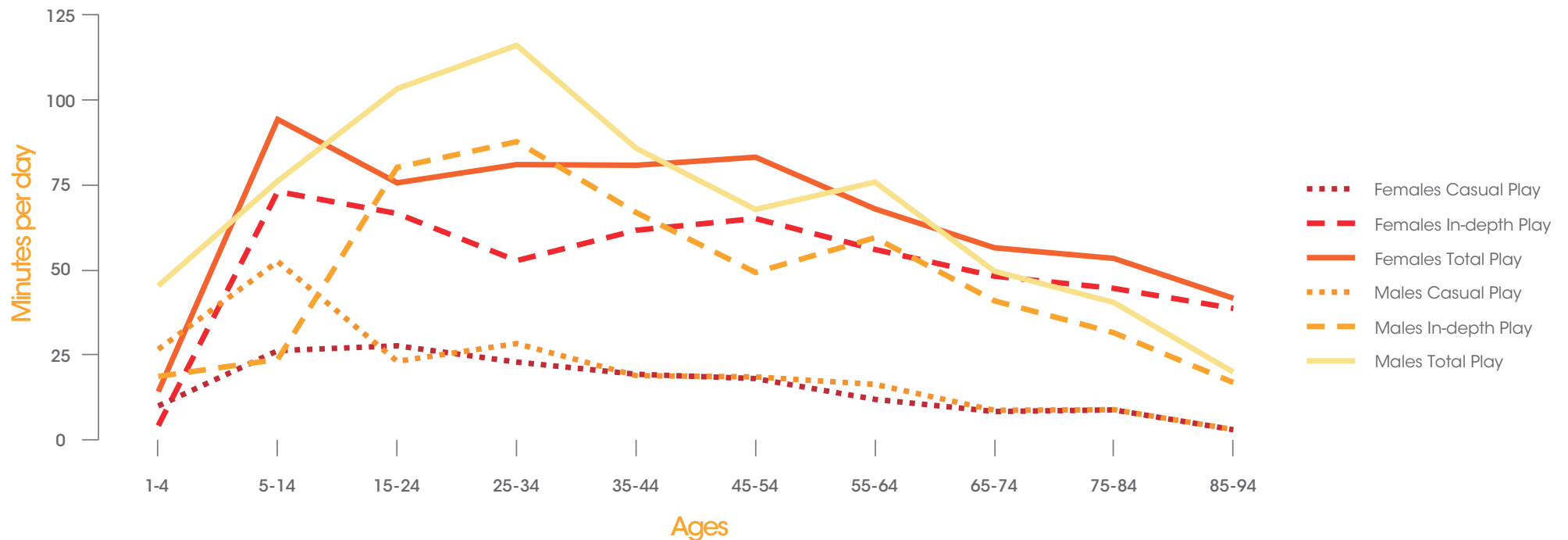
## Gender proportion of all players (%)

Further, of all players, 51% are female, 48% are male, and nearly half a percent reporting non-binary identity. Notably, this is the first time in the research series where female players account for half of the video game player population.

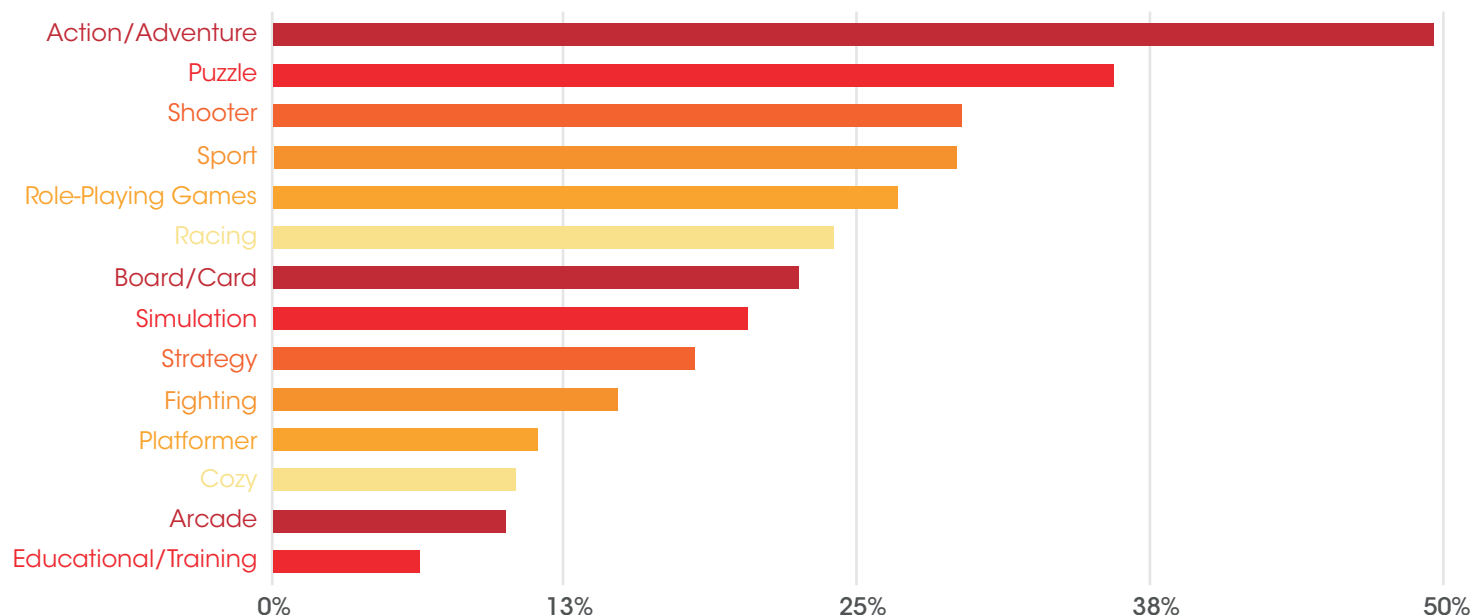


## Total play time by age and gender

We have observed over many years that children and young adults spend more time playing games than older adults, calculated by observing how often and for how long they play. This year, we observed a shift in the age at which males spend the most time playing. Previously, 15-24-year-old males played the most. However, this year, 25-34-year-olds reported more play. As in previous reports, women in age bands from 55-64 years and older spend more time playing than men.



## Types of genres played by Australians (%)



Participants were asked to identify the top three video game genres most played by themselves and members of their household. Action/adventure games emerged as the clear favourite. Following this, the most popular genres across both children and adults were puzzle, shooter, sports, and role-playing games.

## Multiplayer preferences (%)

This year, we asked whether players in the household who play socially preferred to play collaborative or competitive games. Overall, 62% of Australians prefer to play collaborative games.

However, the preference for competitive play increases steadily with age; while the youngest players tend to refer to cooperative games, the oldest players tend to prefer competition.

	U18	18-34	35-64	65+
Collaborative	81%	67%	60%	55%
Competitive	19%	33%	40%	45%

**62%**  
Collaborative



**38%**  
Competitive

# The Family Experience



*Something to bond with my kids over.*

Age 34 Female. Parent. NSW

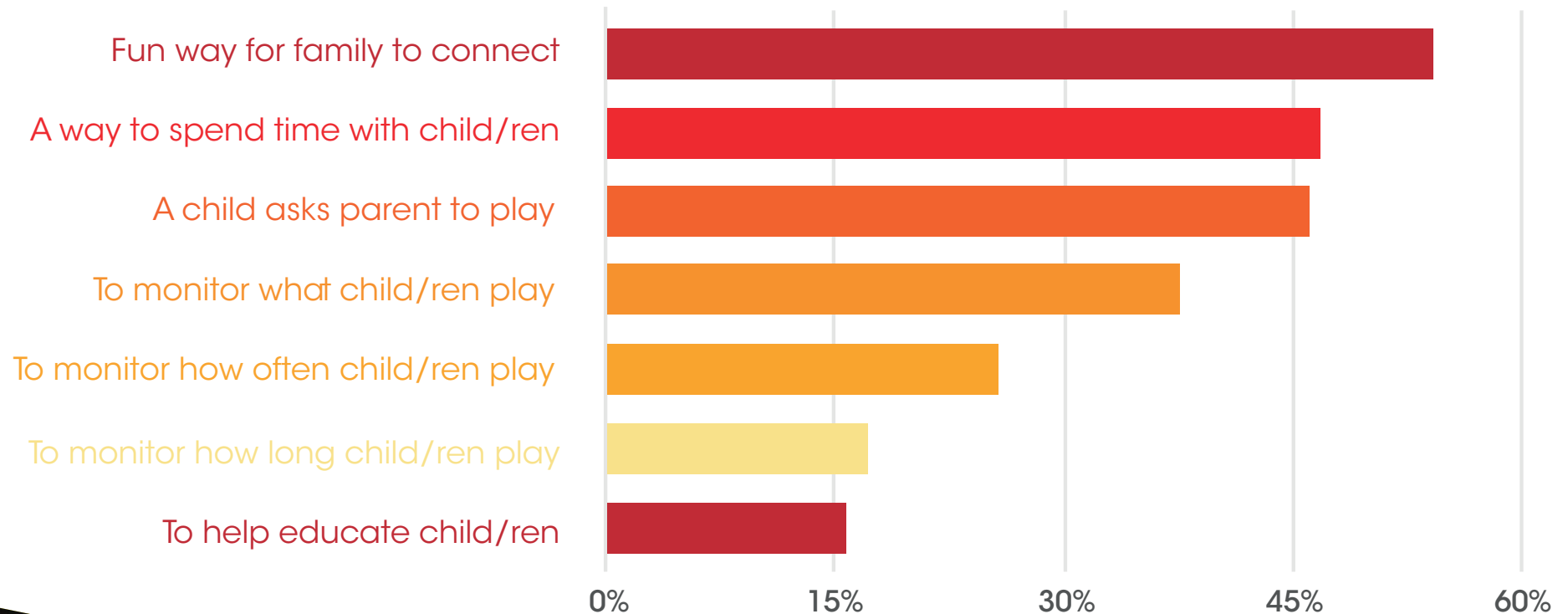
*Collaborating with my 3 grandsons having fun and spending some time together at their request!*

Age 74 Female. Parent. WA





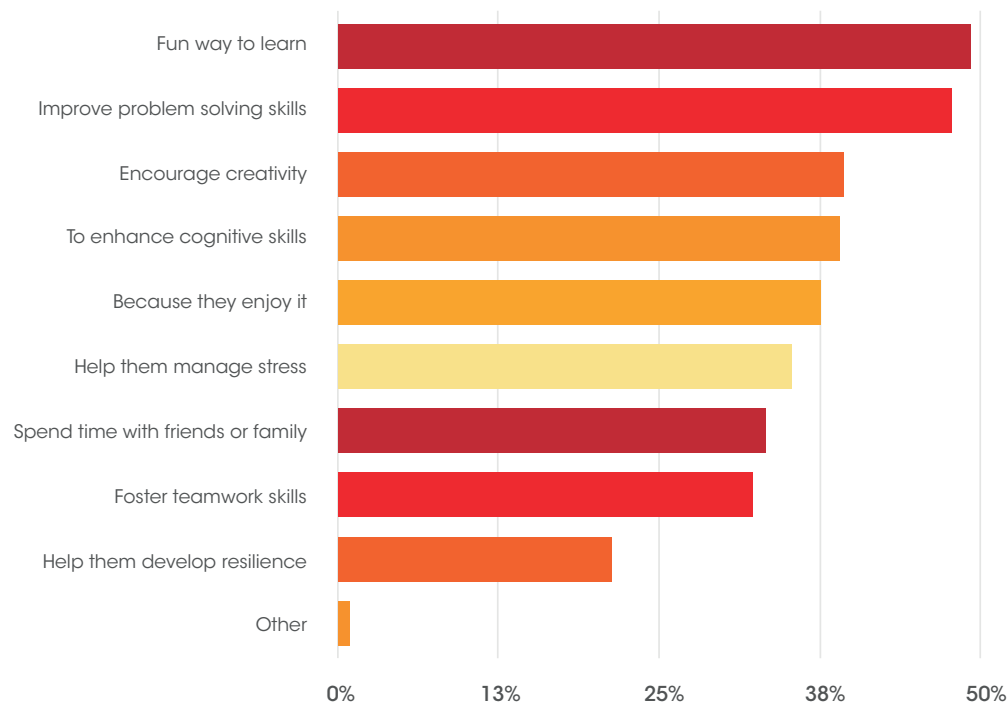
## Why parents play video games with their children (%)



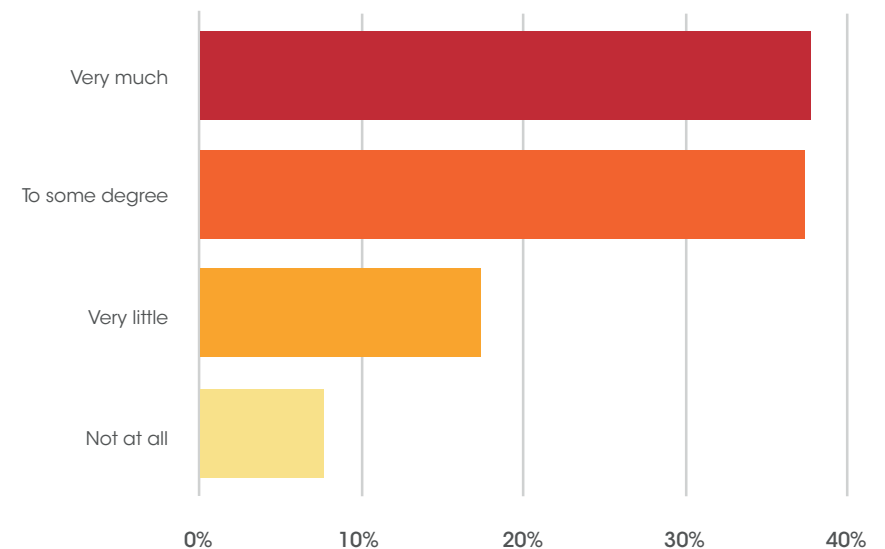
Parents report they allow their children to play video games for many reasons. Limiting their responses to the top three reasons, parents tend to cite games as a fun way to learn (49%), a way to improve problem-solving skills (48%) and encourage creativity and enhance cognitive skills (39% each) most frequently. However, more than 30% of parents cite fostering teamwork skills and over 20% say developing resilience as reasons they let children play.

As with previous years, the number one reason parents play video games with their children is that games offer a fun way for families to connect, and they create a space to spend time with their children.

### Why do parents let their children play (%)



### Parents use of rules for children's game play (%)

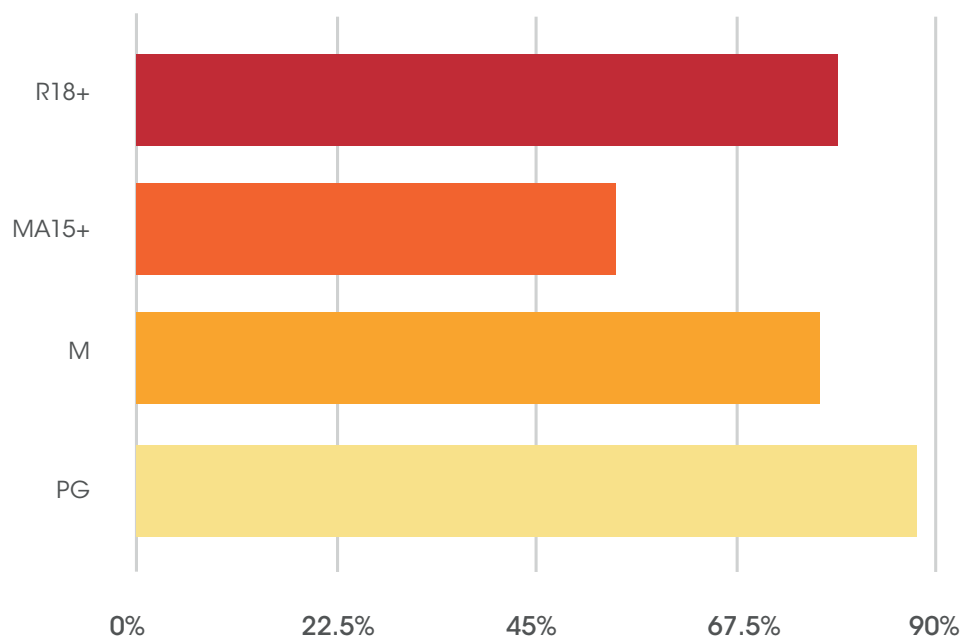


Moreover, 75% of parents say they set rules for their children's video game play, with 38% saying "very much" and another 37% saying "to some degree."

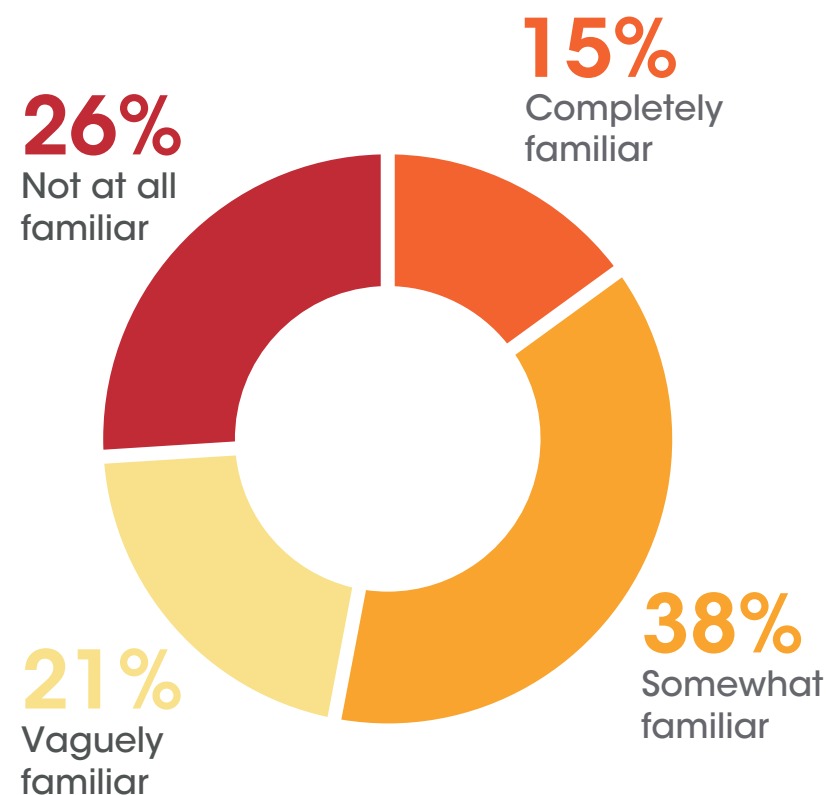
Video games have been the subject of content regulation under a national classification scheme in Australia for many decades. We have demonstrated consistently high levels of awareness among adults of the classification markings and their meanings. A majority of adults are able to correctly identify which classifications are legally restricted and which are not. However, the MA15+ classification is the least well understood.

Just over half of adults feel they are either completely or somewhat familiar with classifications shown on video games.

### Adults correctly identifying restricted classifications (%)

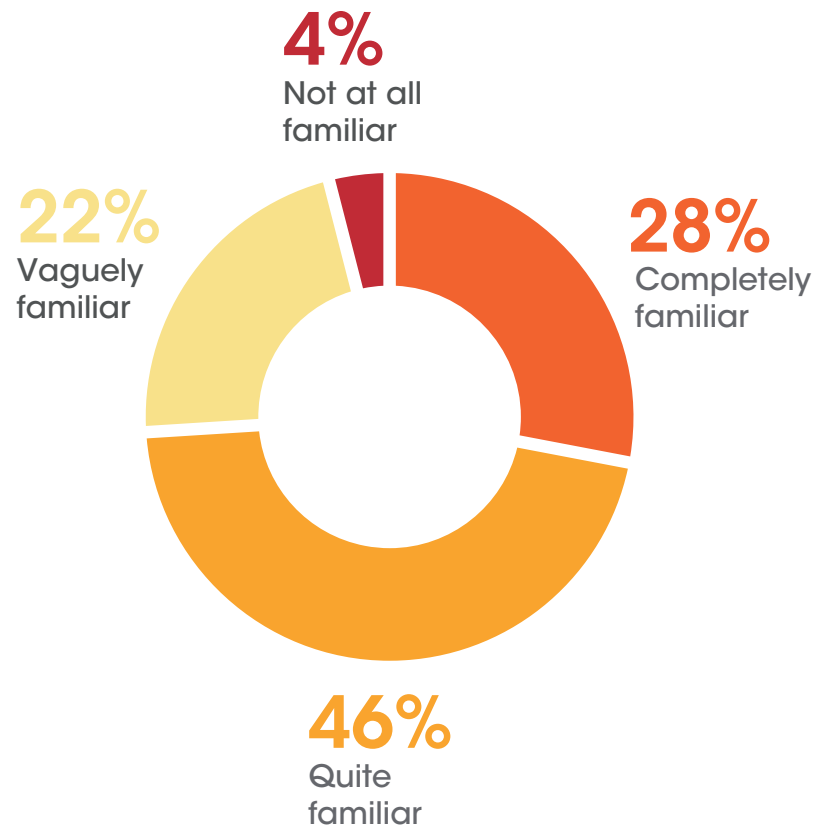


### Adults' familiarity with game classifications (%)

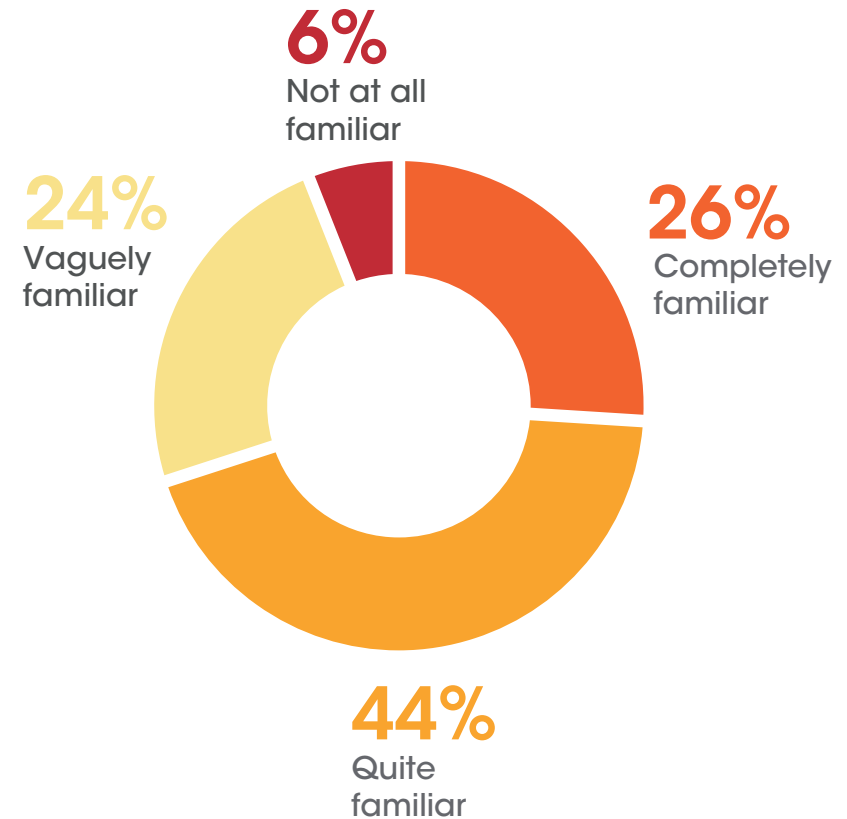




## Adults' familiarity with family controls on game devices (%)



## Adults' familiarity with in-game controls (%)



However, they feel more familiar with family controls on game devices such as consoles, with nearly three-quarters reporting they are either completely or quite familiar.

Over two-thirds of adults report they are either completely or quite familiar with in-game controls.

# Why Do Australians Play Games?





Australians play games...  
**...for fun.**



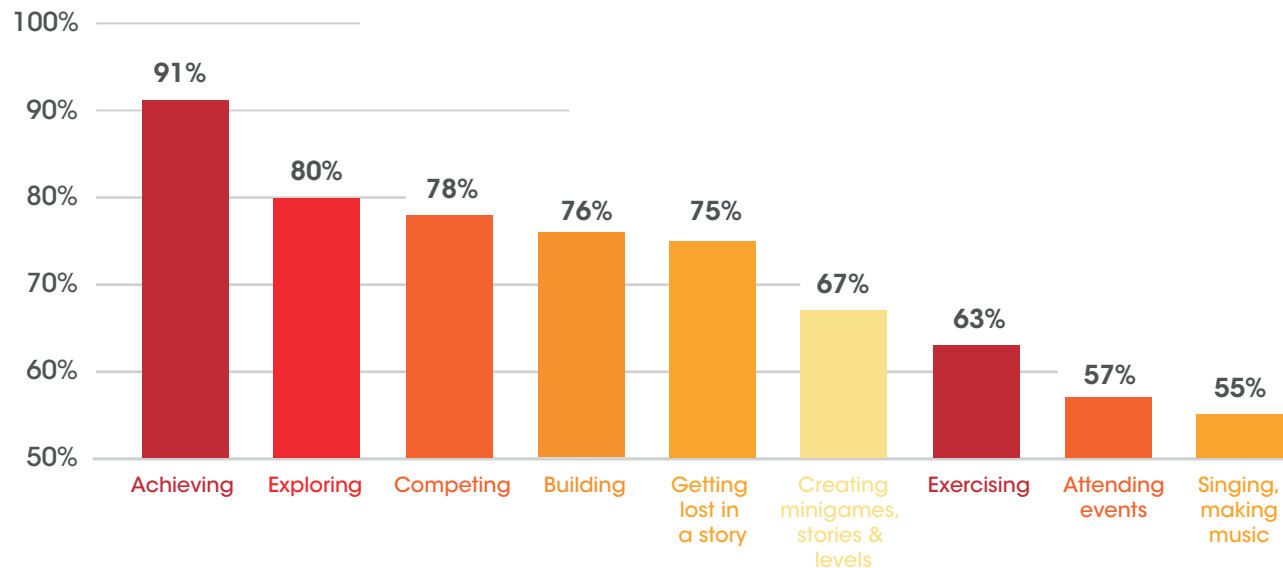
*I enjoy playing games that use my brain and compete with my friends and family to have a laugh.*

Age 61 Female. VIC.



## Game-related content creation objectives (%)

In addition to building and maintaining relationships video game players enjoy engaging with content creation in games to enhance their sense of achievement (91%), add to the experience of exploring (80%) and competing (78%), as well as creating new content such as building (76%) and getting lost in the story (75%) to go so far as creating minigames, stories and levels in some games (67%), among other activities.



## Australians' Top 5 reasons to play

1. To have fun
2. To relax and destress
3. To pass time
4. Have a break from daily life
5. Be challenged





Australians play games...

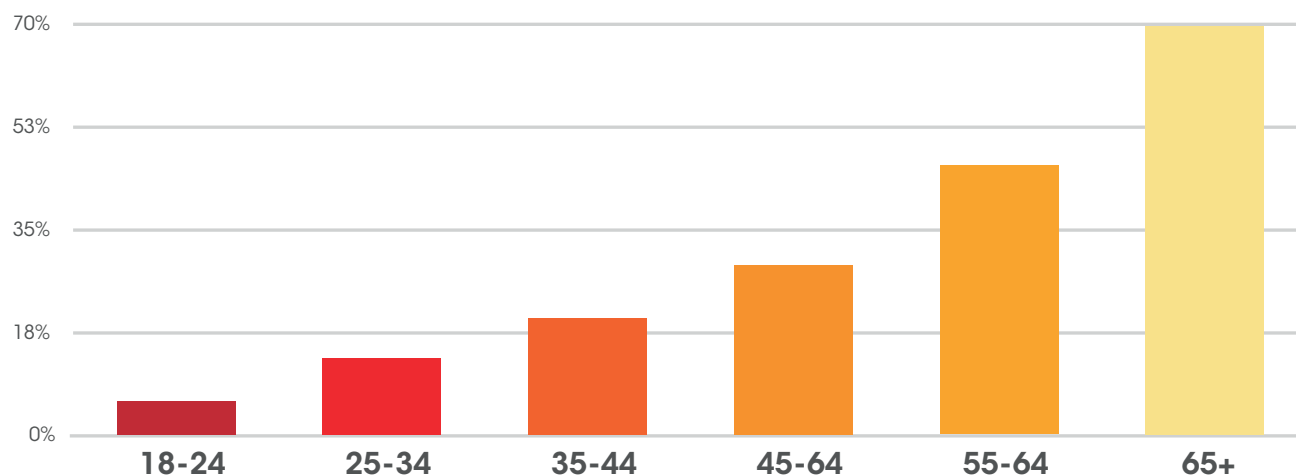
# ...for connection.

**77%** of Australians who play video games play them socially, with others.

Evidence about the social ways in which Australians play video games has busted the long-standing stereotypes about lonely and competitive play.

We have observed that social play is inversely related to age. As we age, we tend to play more solo games.

Only play games alone by age group (%)



“

*It means spending time with those who mean the most to me and having fun and achieving together.*

Age 18 Male. ACT.

”

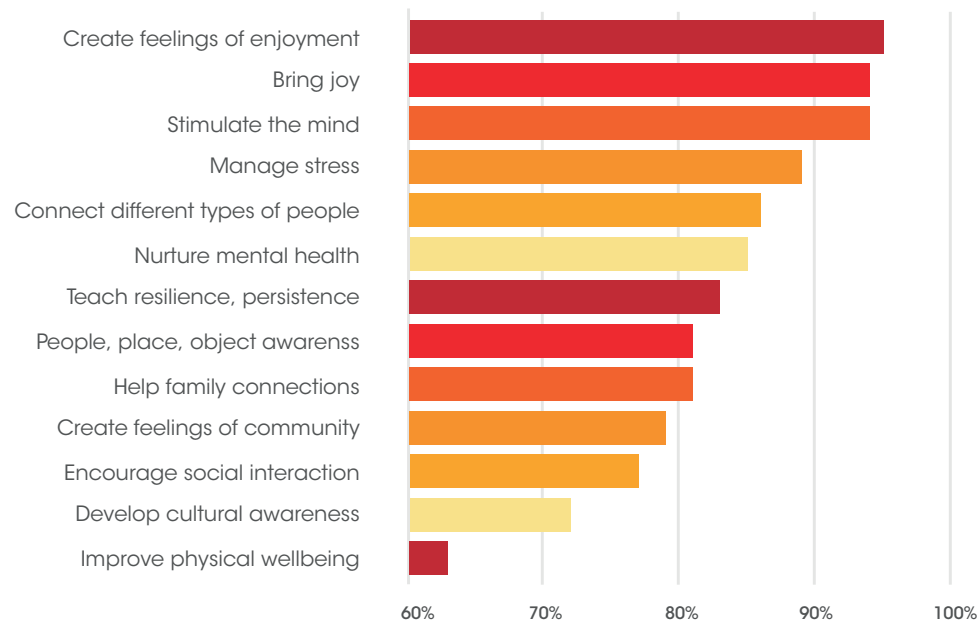


Australians play games...

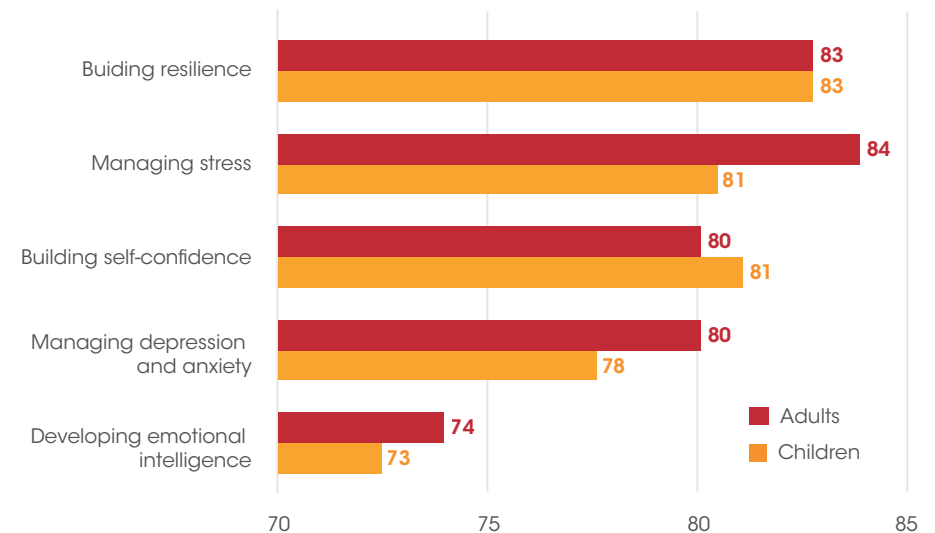
# ...for health & well being.

Australian adults believe that video games offer personal growth to those who play. The most obvious potential of games is to create feelings of enjoyment (95%), joy (94%), stimulate the mind (94%), connect different types of people (86%), create different types of awareness (81%) and improve physical wellbeing (63%), among other areas of personal growth.

## Potential of games for personal growth (%)



## Potential of games for mental wellbeing (%)



Most agree that video games have potential mental health benefits for those who play, whether they are young or old. These benefits for children and adults include resilience, stress management, building self-confidence, managing depression and anxiety, and developing emotional intelligence.

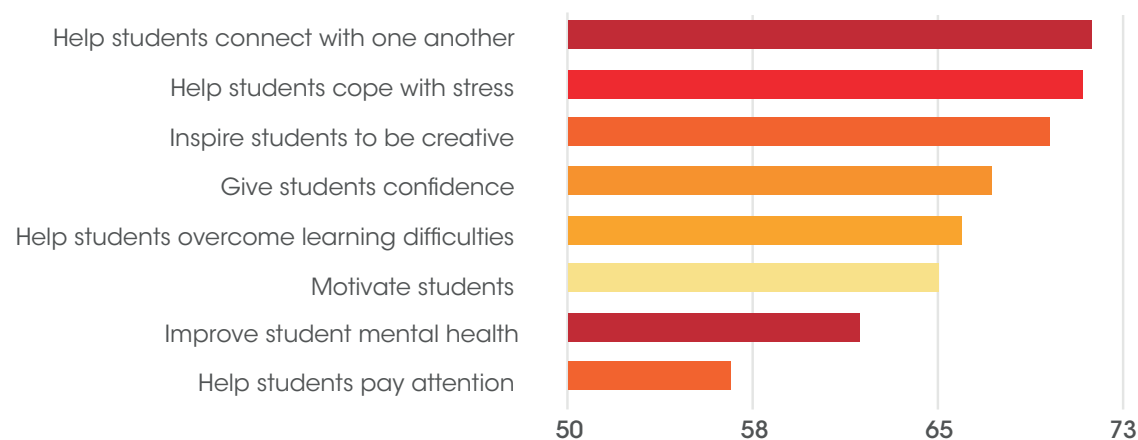




# Australians play games... ...for education.

## Potential of games for student experience (%)

The capacity of games for learning and training extends to their potential in schools, according to most adults, regardless of whether they themselves play video games. For example, more than half and less than three-quarters believe games in schools can help all eight areas about which we asked, including: social connection, coping with stress, inspiring creativity, boosting confidence, overcoming learning difficulties, motivating, improving mental health, and paying attention.



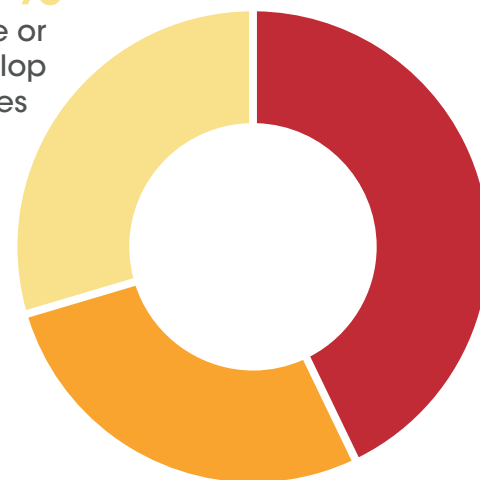
## Children using games at school (%)

**29%**

Make or develop games

**42%**

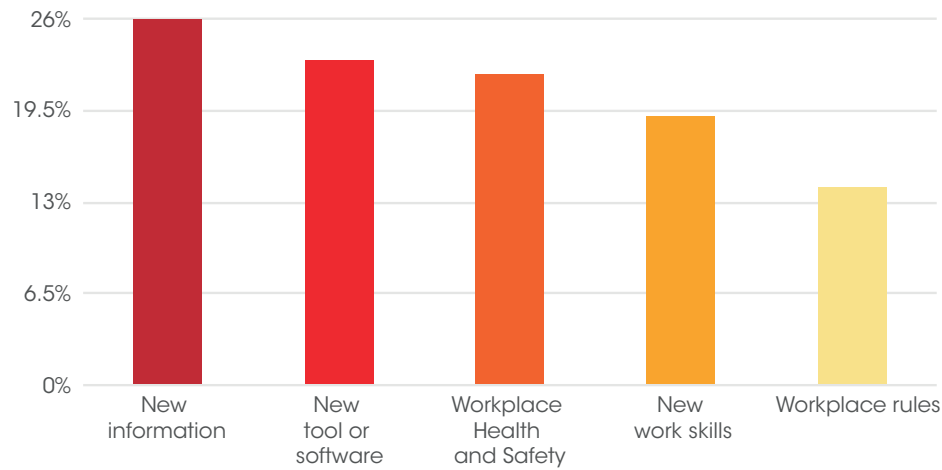
Use games to teach



**27%**

Use games in clubs

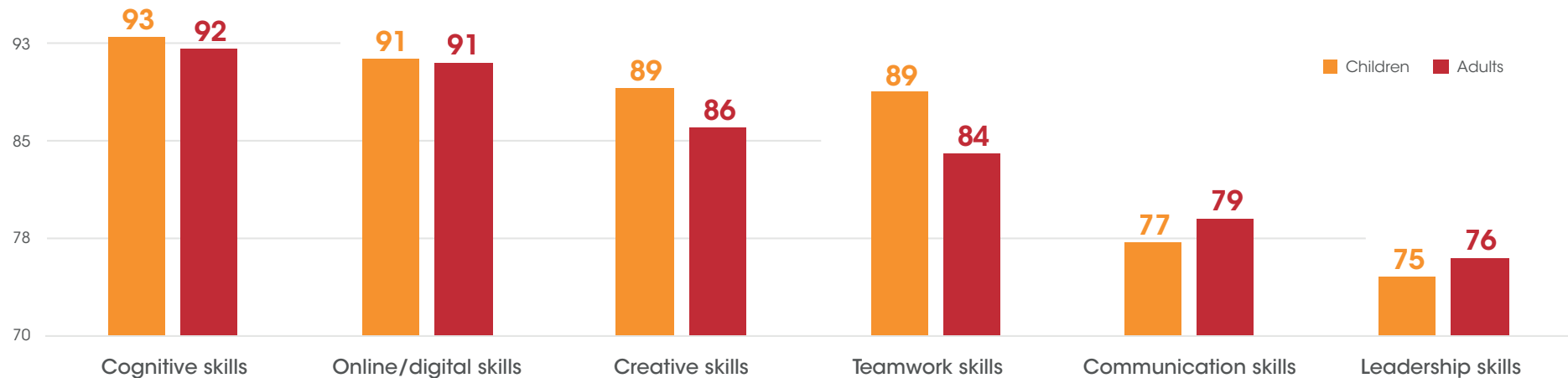
According to parents, 42% of children's schools use games to facilitate teaching, 29% include game development in the technology curriculum, and 27% have dedicated clubs for games in a variety of contexts.



## Using games at work (%)

As in previous reports, the 2025 data show that games and gamification are a key part of work life with 26% of Australian adults saying they have used games at work to learn new information. Overall, more than 20% have used a game environment to learn on the job.

## Potential of Games for Skills Development (%)



Moreover, the vast majority of adults, regardless of whether they themselves play video games, believe that games create a great environment for developing skills. This finding holds for the potential of children and adults to learn from games. Games were ranked positively for both age groups across all six areas for which skills development was presented, including: cognitive, digital, creative, teamwork, communication and leadership skills.

Play by the ages...

# 18-34



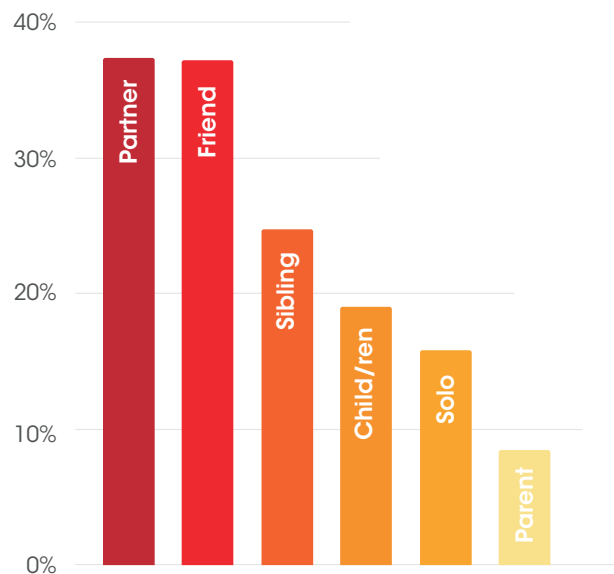
## Top 5 Reasons

why 18-34 year-olds play

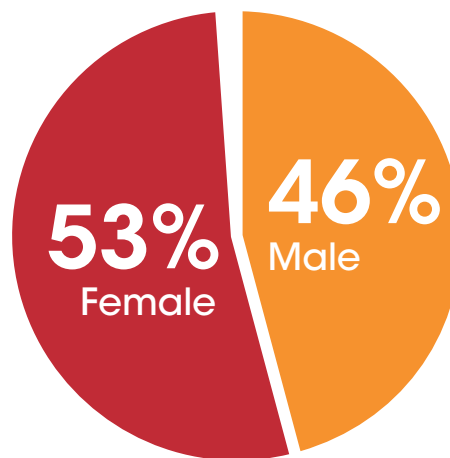
**1. Have fun**

**2. Relax or de-stress 3. Relieve boredom**

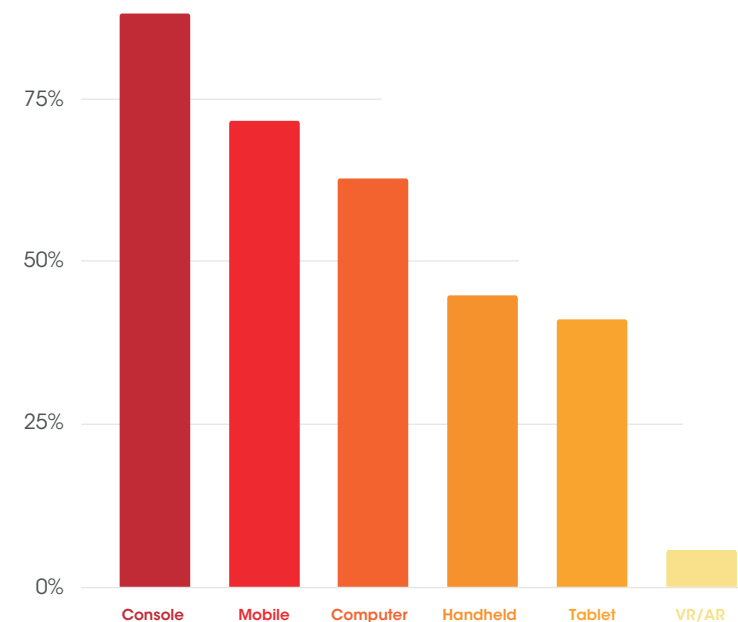
**4. Have a break from daily life 5. Be challenged**



Who do 18-34 year olds play video games with socially?



What proportion of 18-34 year old players are male or female?



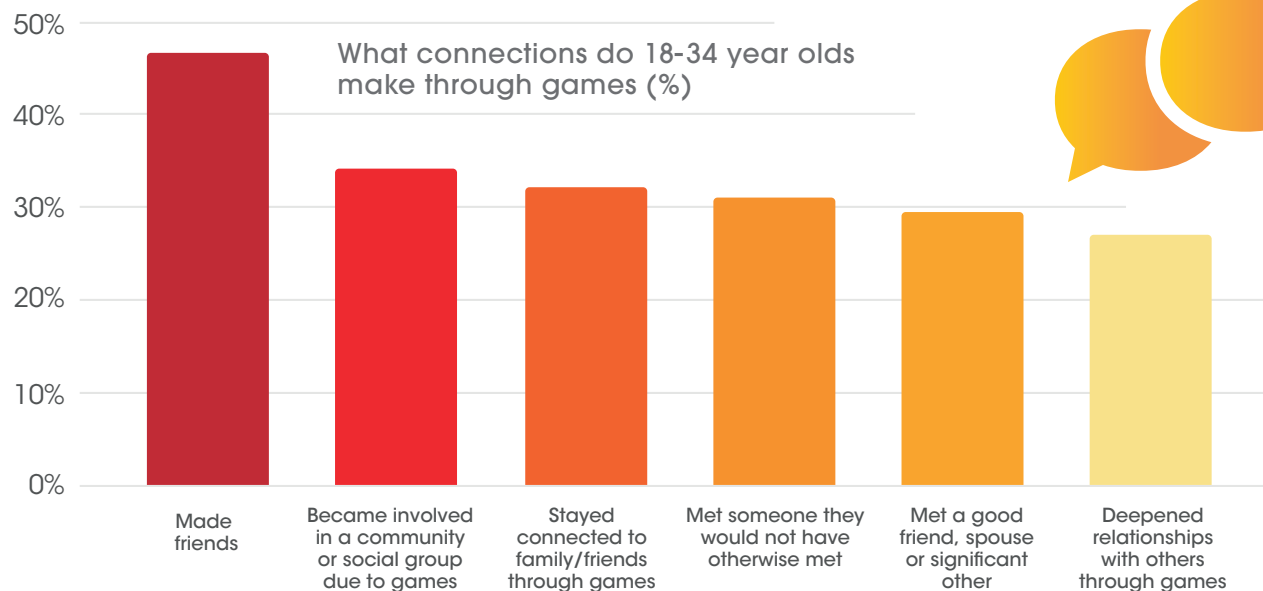
What gaming devices do 18-34 year old players have in their households?



*It gives me something to look forward to. If I'm having a bad day at work, I think about coming home and getting to play my games. My partner and I play Fortnite most days and it's a way for us to sit together and connect as it requires patience and good communication.*



Age 29 Female, VIC.



How do 18-34 year olds prefer to play together?



### Top 5 in-game activities for 18-34 year-olds

1. Achieving
2. Exploring
3. Building
4. Lost in a story
5. Competing



### Top 5 game genres for 18-34 year-olds

1. Action/adventure
2. Role-playing games
3. Simulation
4. Racing
5. Sport

Play by the ages...

# 35-64



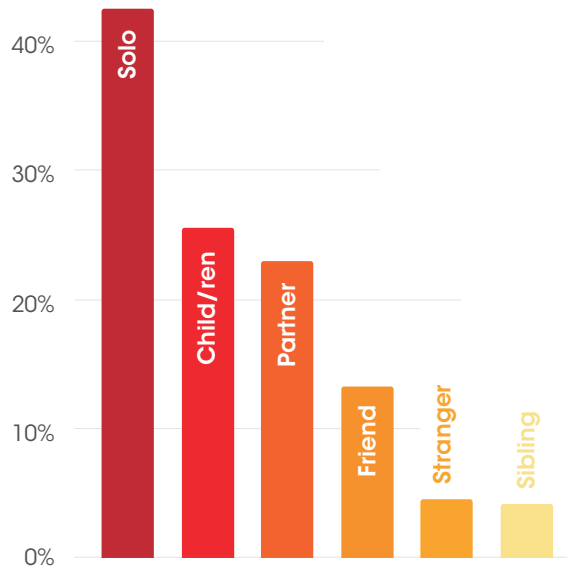
## Top 5 Reasons why 35-64 year-olds play

**1. Have fun**

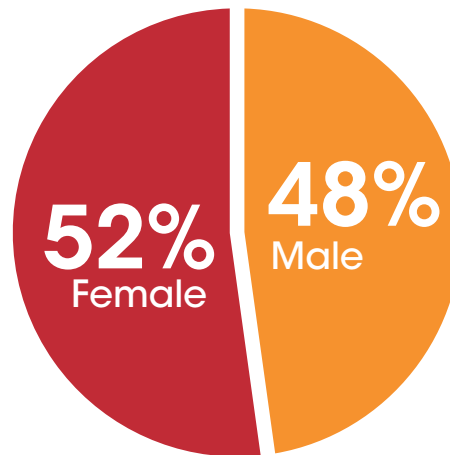
**2. Relax or de-stress**

**3. Have a break from daily life**

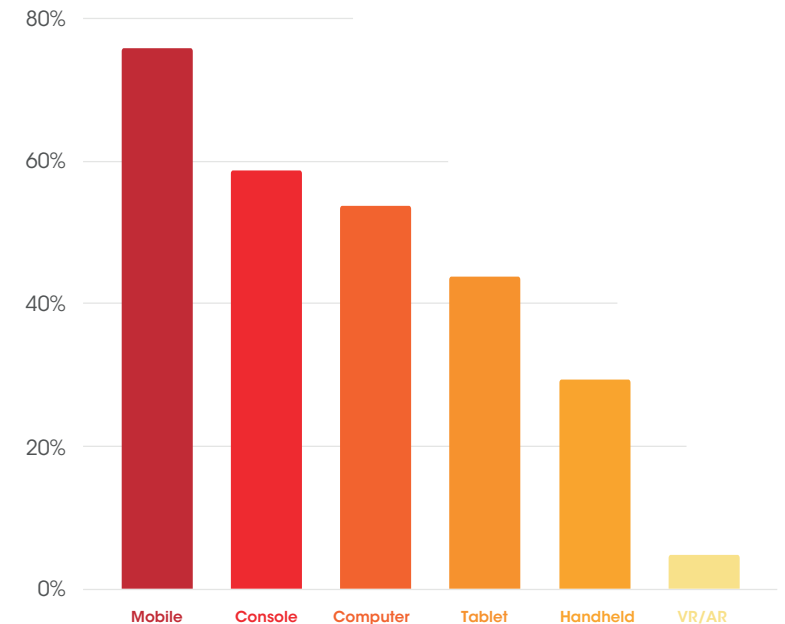
**4. Relieve boredom    5. Be challenged**



Who do 35-64 year olds play video games with socially?



What proportion of 35-64 year old players are male or female?



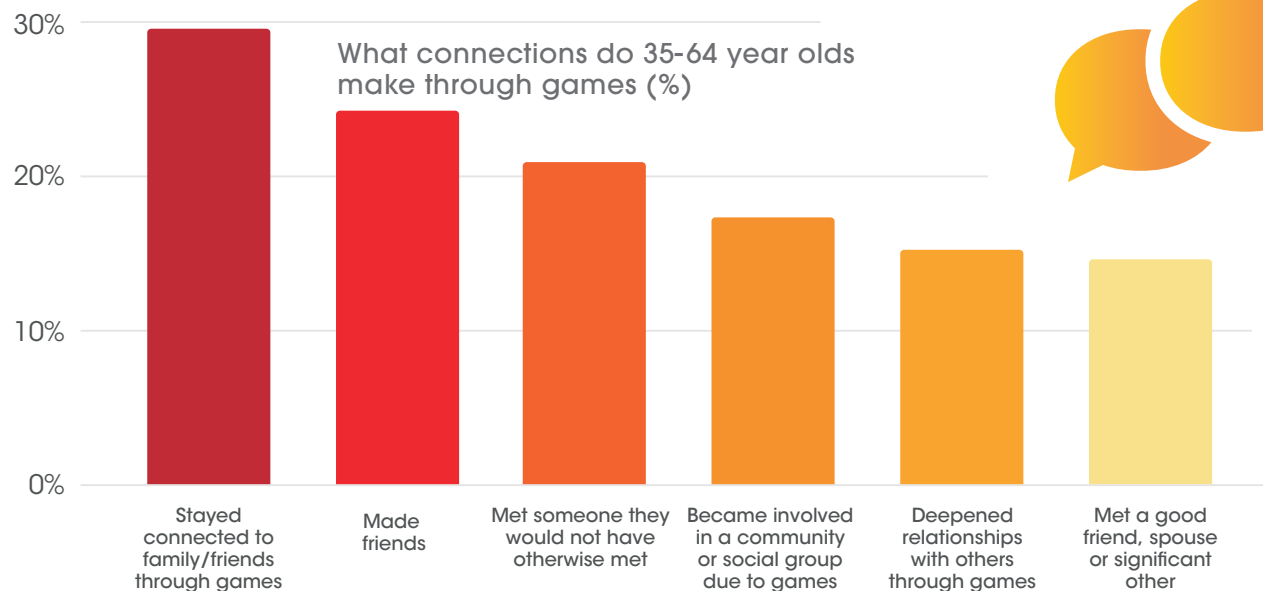
What gaming devices do 35-64 year old players have in their households?





*Firstly, it's a form of relaxation. After a long and tiring day, immersing myself in a virtual world allows me to unwind. Whether it's exploring a beautiful open - world game or engaging in a fast - paced action game to release stress, it serves as a mental escape.*

Age 55 Transgender Individual. WA.



How do 35-64 year olds prefer to play together?



### Top 5 in-game activities for 35-64 year-olds

1. Achieving
2. Exploring
3. Competing
4. Building
5. Lost in a story



### Top 5 game genres for 35-64 year-olds

1. Puzzle
2. Action/Adventure
3. Board/Card
4. Sport
5. Racing

Play by the ages...

# 65+



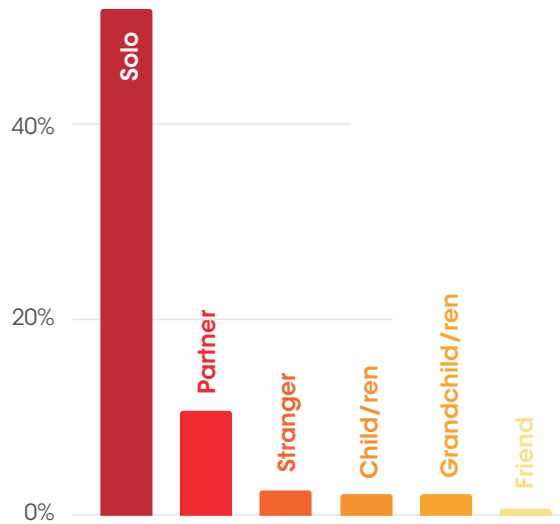
## Top 5 Reasons

why 65+ year-olds play

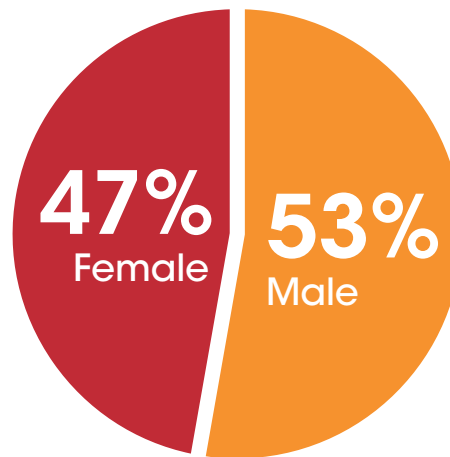
**1. Have fun**

**2. Be challenged 3. Relax or de-stress**

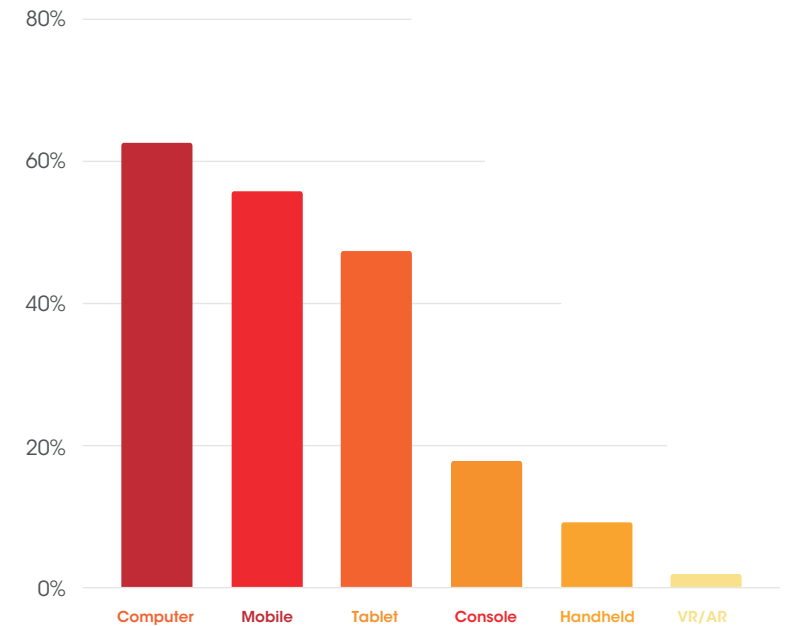
**4. Improve mental health 5. Sense of accomplishment**



Who do 65+ year olds play video games with socially?



What proportion of 65+ year old players are male or female?

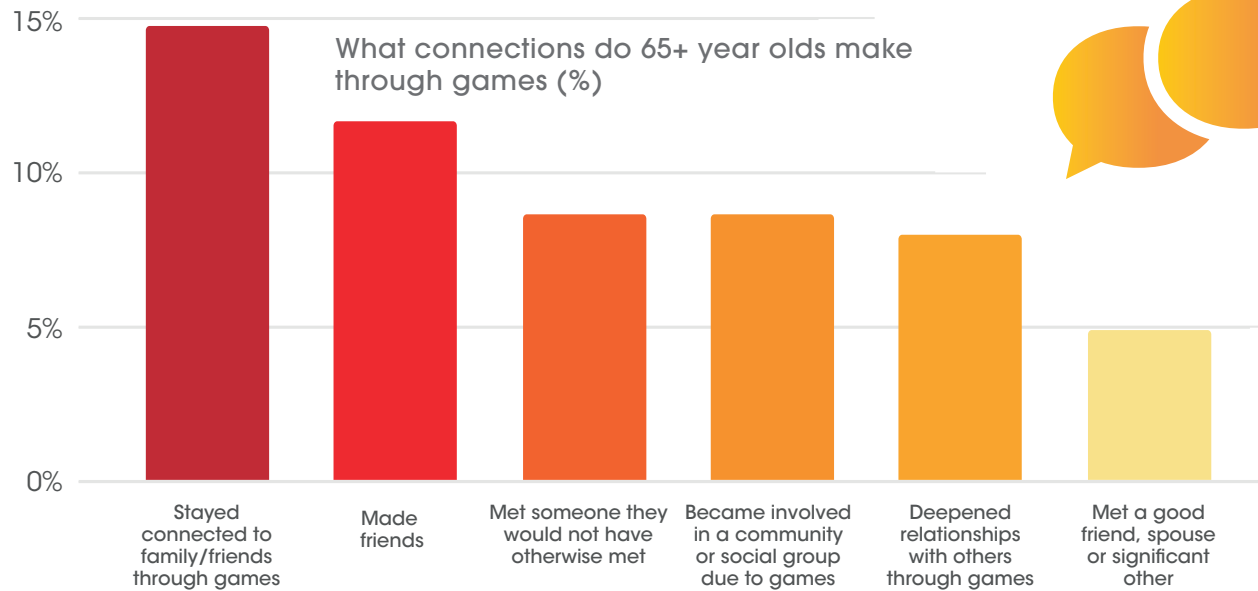


What gaming devices do 65+ year old players have in their households?



*It helps keep a positive attitude and goals to reach which also enables motivation and a purpose for other areas to set goals in daily life, it also relieves mental stress by relaxing you and leaving you with accomplishment for that area.*

Age 65 Female. VIC.



How do 65+ year olds prefer to play together?



### Top 5 in-game activities for 65+ year-olds

1. Achieving
2. Competing
3. Exploring
4. Building
5. Lost in a story



### Top 5 game genres for 65+ year-olds

1. Board/Card
2. Puzzle
3. Sport
4. Action/Adventure
5. Strategy

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# METHODS, SAMPLES AND SUBSAMPLES

Australia Plays is a study of 1,241 Australian households represented by adult participants aged 18 and over who responded to over 80 questions and their many response options.

Household-level statistics include demographics, household device profiles, attitudes, and knowledge questions. Parents represent 394 of the 1,241 household adult respondents. Data on play time (including frequency and duration, genre preferences, and common playing experiences) were drawn from adult participants and one other nominated household member (n=1,309). Age, gender and player status were drawn from the participants and all members of the household (n=2,549).

Participants were drawn randomly from the Qualtrics XM panel in May 2025; research was designed and conducted at Bond University. The margin of error is 2.7%.

Report authors have edited quotes only for grammar, spelling and punctuation but have not changed the content or meaning set by participants who shared their experiences.

AUSTRALIA  
**PLAYS25**

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interactive games & entertainment association

