



# The AWU-Auspoll Job Satisfaction Index



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REPORT PREPARED FOR:

**The Australian Workers' Union (AWU)**

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# Methodology



- ▶ This report presents the results of a survey of Australian workers to determine their perceptions, experiences and expectations resulting from the global financial crisis and its effects on the local economy.
- ▶ This is the second edition of an index that will be conducted annually. The survey again asks questions that were first asked in an AWU survey in January 2009.
- ▶ The survey was undertaken online and conducted from 14<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010.
- ▶ The overall sample size was 1260, segmented and weighted to be nationally representative of Australia's working population by gender, age, location and family status (i.e. single/co-habiting, with kids/without kids). Workers living in regional areas were oversampled to ensure the sample of regional workers was large enough to analyse.
- ▶ The accuracy of the results at an overall level (n = 1260) is +/- 2.8% at the 95% confidence interval. This means, for example, that if the survey returns a result of 50%, there will be a 95% chance that the actual result will be between 47.2% and 52.8%.
- ▶ Note: All percentage figures in this report are rounded. Accordingly, totals may not add up to 100%.



## Increased confidence in the economy

- ▶ Australian workers are more optimistic about the state of the economy than they were a year ago.
  - ▶ Only one-third as many workers say the economy will deteriorate over the next twelve months compared to a year ago (16% compared to 45%).
  - ▶ Workers are less likely than a year ago to say the GFC will have a large effect on Australia (62% vs 78%).

## Personal experience

- ▶ However, optimism about the economy as a whole has not translated into personal experience.
  - ▶ Workers are in fact more likely to report difficulties at work in the last six months (such as increased workload or losing their job) as they did a year ago (up to 49% from 42% in 2009).



## Demographic differences

- ▶ Workers from higher income households are likely to have faced fewer difficulties at work and remain more confident about the economy.
  - ▶ For example, 49% of workers in households earning under \$50,000 are concerned about losing their job, but only 23% of workers in households earning over \$100,000 feel the same.
  - ▶ 47% of workers in households earning under \$50,000 expect the economy to improve, compared to 56% of workers in households earning over \$100,000.
- ▶ Older workers have faced and expect to face fewer difficulties at work than younger workers.
  - ▶ For example, 50% of workers aged 18-29 are concerned about higher workloads in the next twelve months, compared to 32% of workers aged over 50.
- ▶ A major exception to this pattern arises in perceived ability to find another job.
  - ▶ For example, 51% of workers aged 18-29 are confident they could find a similar job with equivalent pay and benefits. Only 35% of workers aged over 50 are as confident.



## Demographic differences

- ▶ Regional workers report somewhat fewer problems with job security and work conditions than metropolitan workers. However, the gap between them is not particularly large.
- ▶ For example, 32% of regional workers were concerned about losing their job in the last six months, but this rose to 38% of metropolitan workers.
  - ▶ Many of the largest employment losses from the GFC came in capital cities (eg in the finance industry) so this may be a source of any difference.

These demographic differences are fairly consistent across the work-related questions, so they are not set out in individual slides to avoid repeating ourselves.

## Confidence

- ▶ Confidence in unions, government and employers is low. Only 39% express confidence in unions (though government and employers fare even worse).
- ▶ However, workers say that unions are the most likely group to act in the interests of workers (49%).
- ▶ These results are consistent across both years.
- ▶ Attitudes to employers remain cool. 67% say employers are too concerned with profits, and only 28% have been consulted by their employer about the employer's future plans.



## Government policies

- ▶ The government's handling of the GFC is seen as good or better by 49% of workers.
  - ▶ This is a slight improvement from last year, when the figure was 45%.
- ▶ The most popular government policies that were tested are funding for infrastructure projects (81% support) and funding initiatives encouraging people to buy Australian made (78%).
- ▶ The only two policies that have become considerably less popular since last year are a new spending package (falling from 62% support to 49%) and deficit spending (from 59% to 52%). This fits with workers' generally more optimistic view of the wider economy.

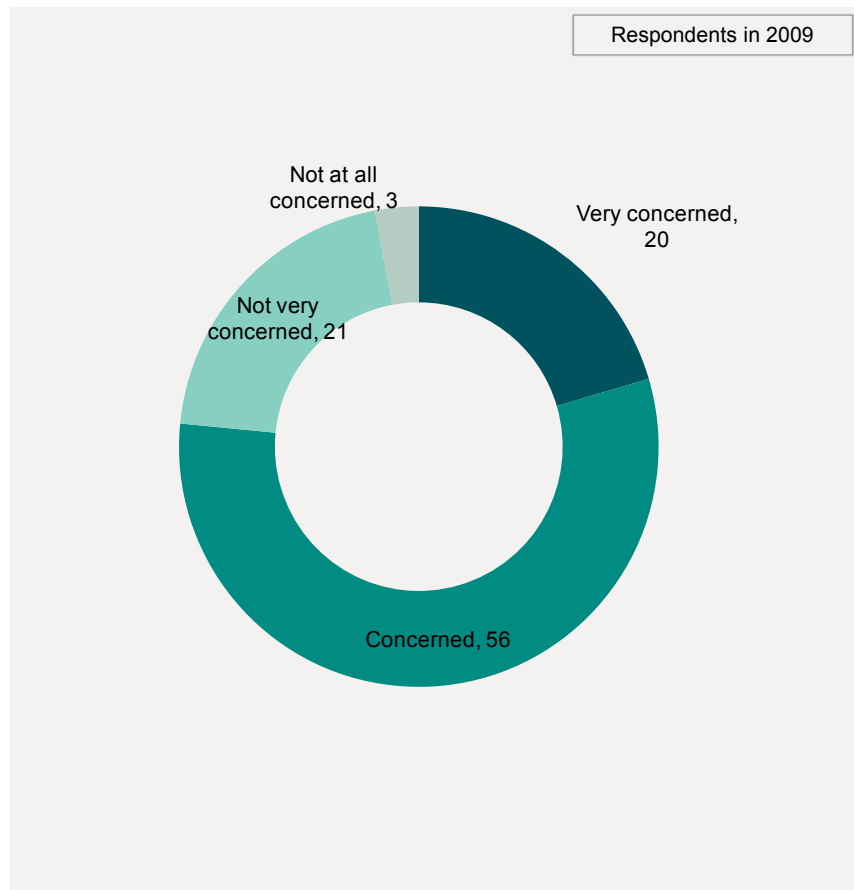
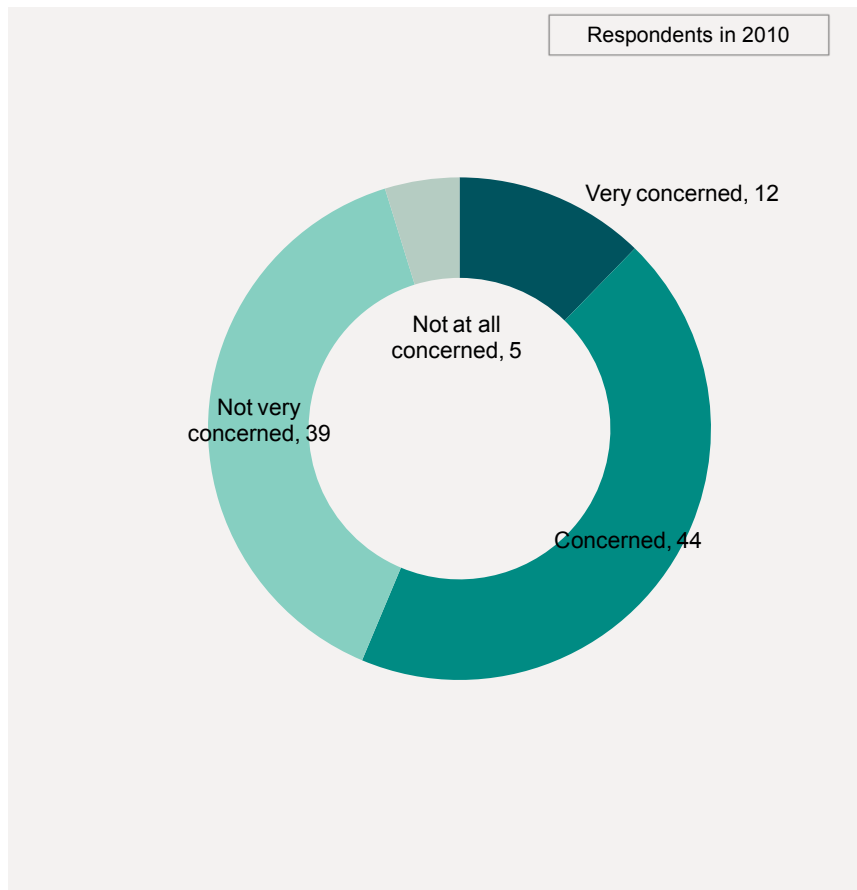
## Industrial relations and politics

- ▶ A clear majority (58%) believe that workers need more protection of their pay and conditions.
  - ▶ Workers largely believe (50%) that the ALP shares this view. In contrast, they perceive the Liberal Party as supporting more flexibility (57%). This means workers are considerably more likely to say the ALP shares their view than the Liberals.
- ▶ Kevin Rudd far outranks Tony Abbott as the leader who would do the better job of securing working conditions (by 44% to 15%).
- ▶ These questions were not asked last year. Therefore no tracking numbers are available, unlike other questions in the survey.



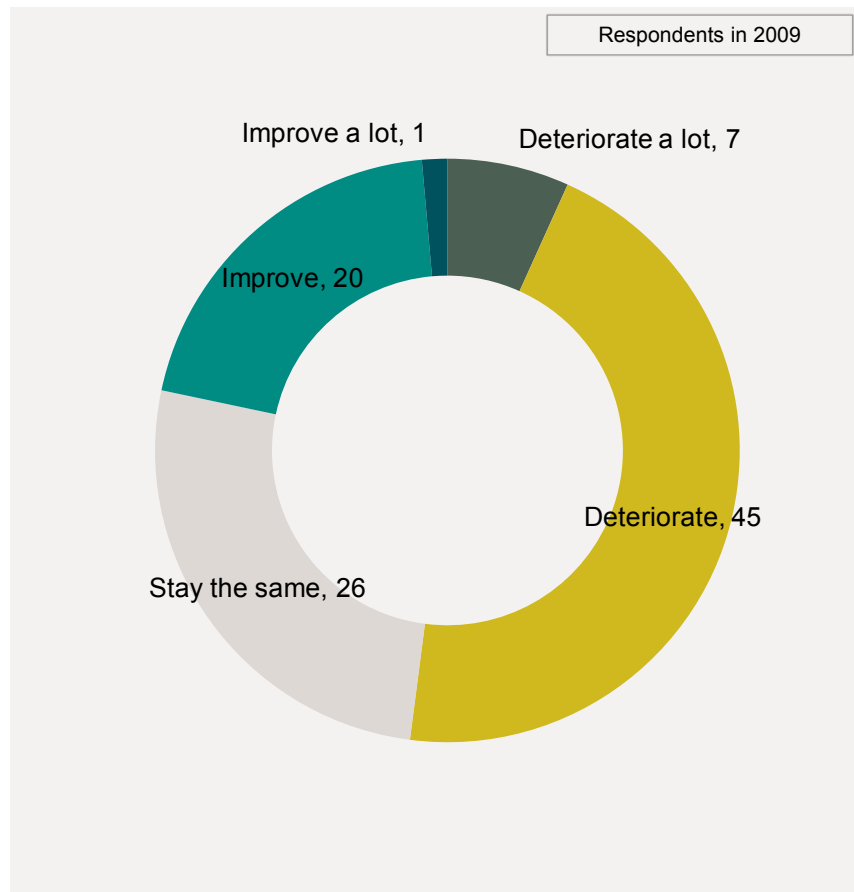
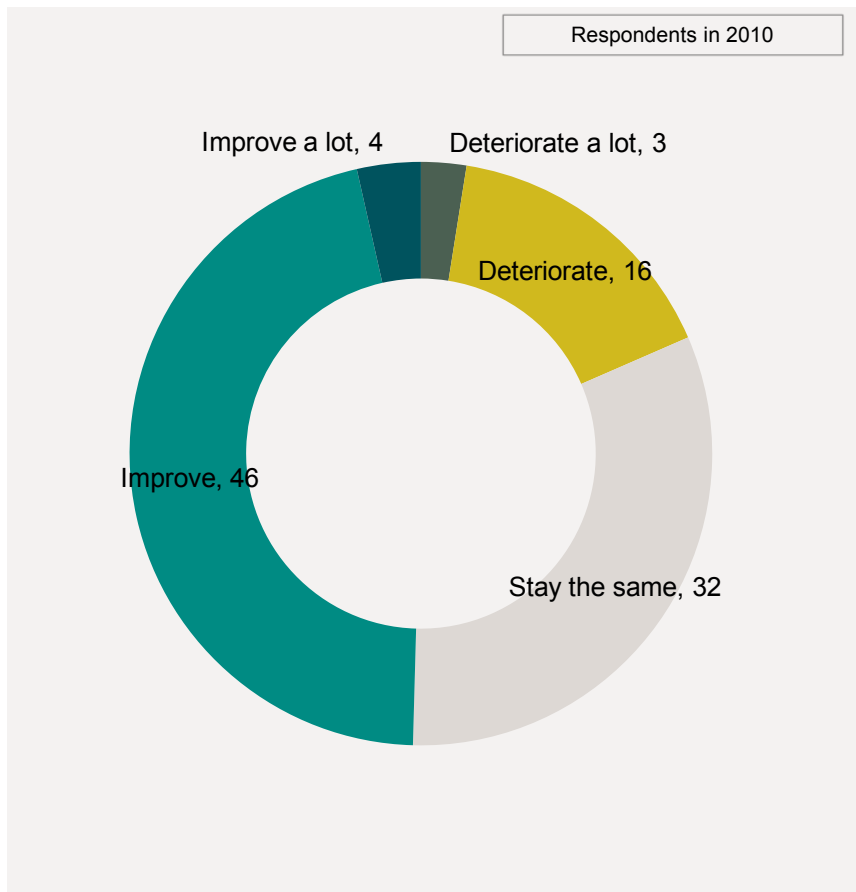
# Views on the wider economy

# Respondents are considerably less concerned with the state of the economy than last they were last year



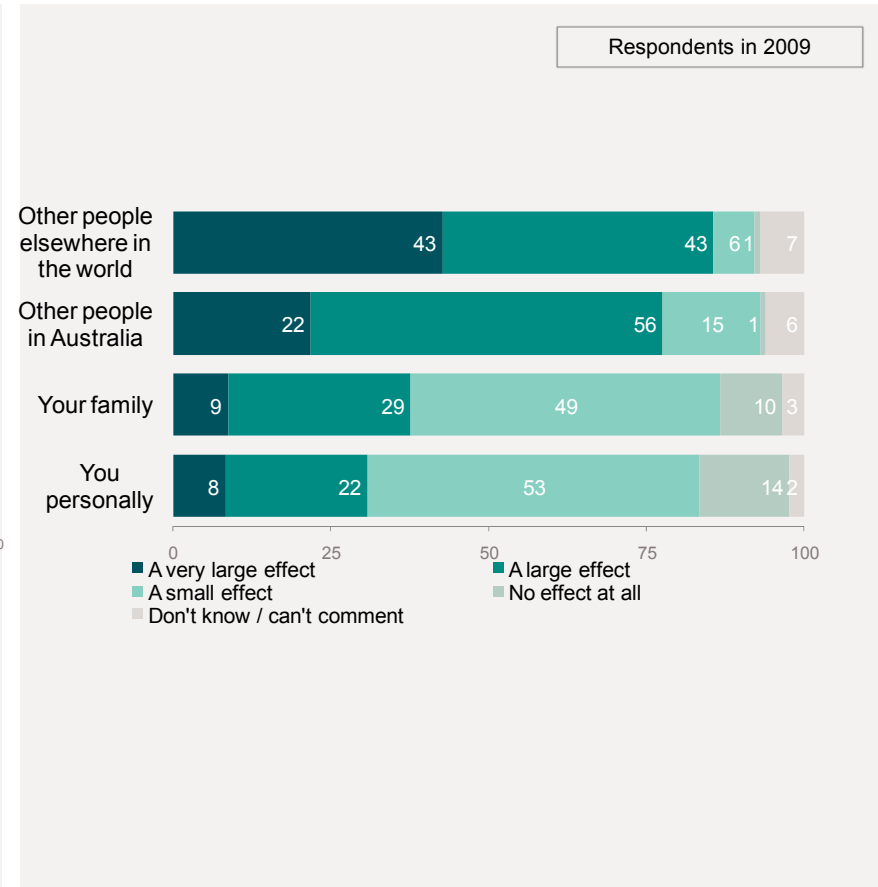
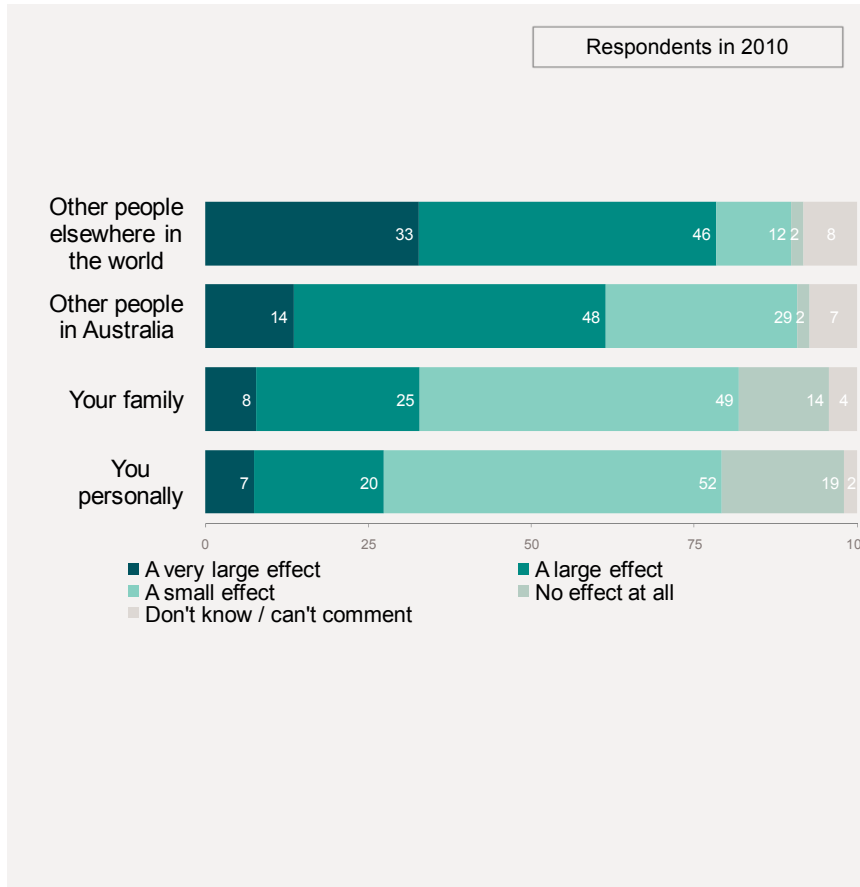
The proportion who are “not at all concerned” or “not very concerned” has almost doubled since 2009 from 24% to 44%.

# Respondents are most likely to believe the economy will improve over the next twelve months



- ▶ The number of respondents who believe the economy will deteriorate is just a third of what it was a year ago (16% compared to 45%).
- ▶ This is a huge change in sentiment that is not usually seen in tracking polls.

# Respondents believe the GFC will have the biggest effect on people elsewhere in the world and other people in Australia

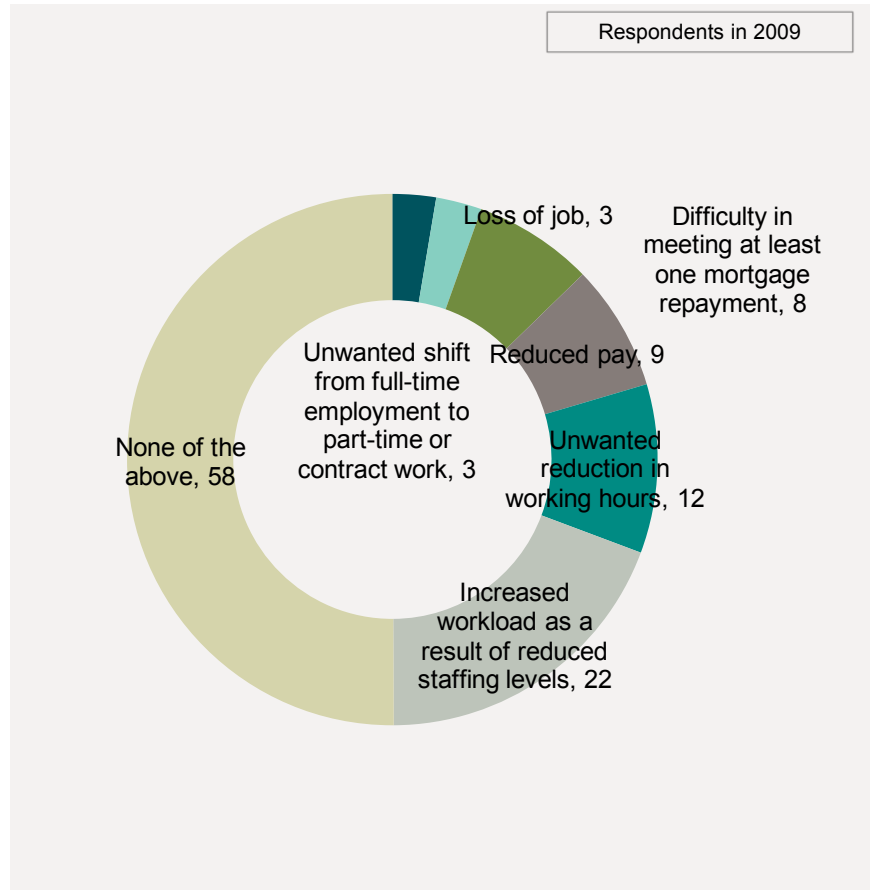
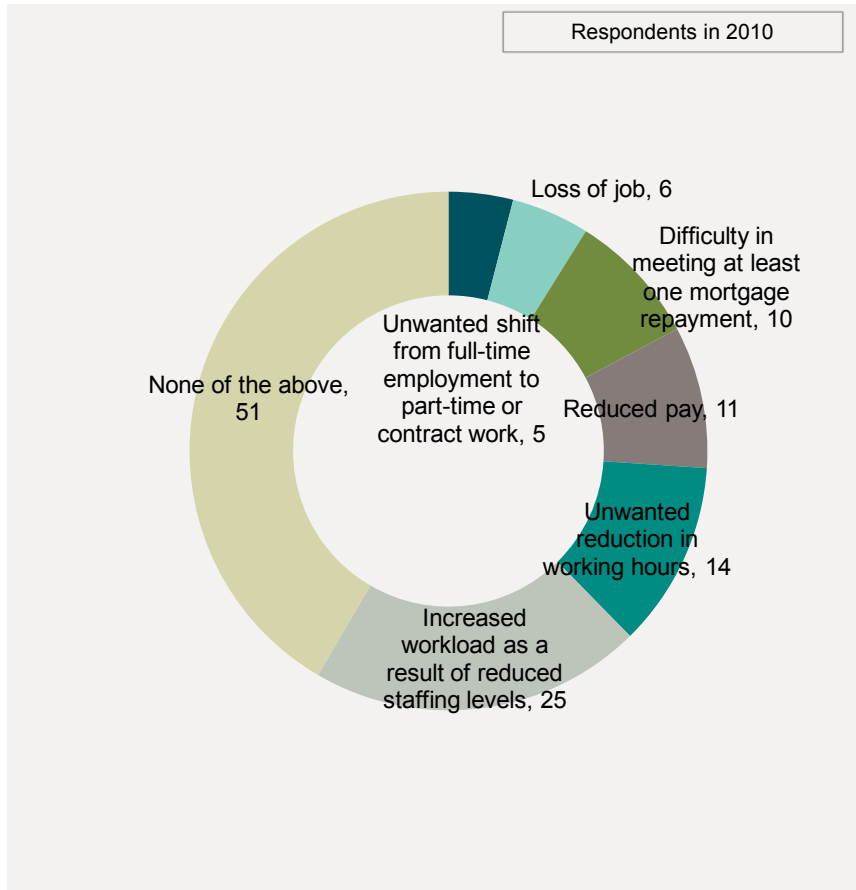


- ▶ The perceived impact on other Australians and people in other countries has dropped from a year ago.
- ▶ However the perceived impacts of the GFC on workers themselves and their families have changed little in the last year.



# Personal circumstances

# Workers are actually more likely to have experienced a setback at work in the last twelve months than in the previous survey

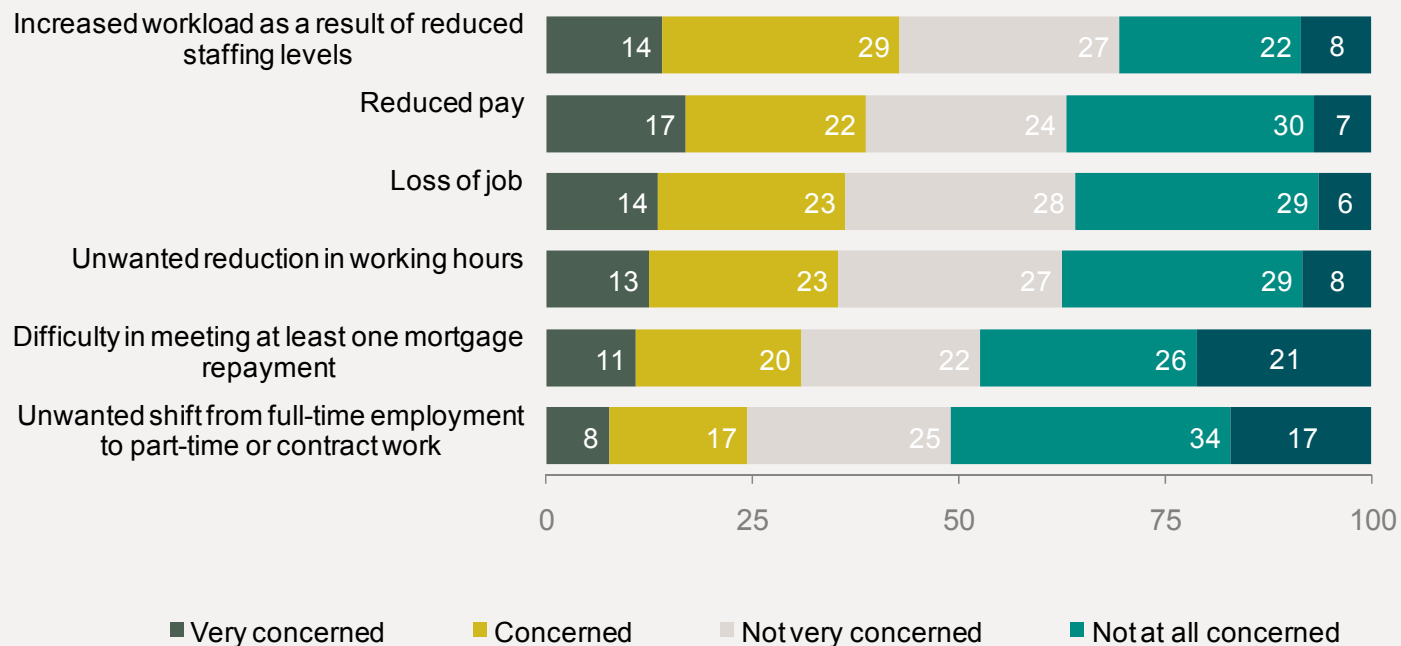


Increased workload is the most likely problem workers have faced. Only half have experienced no problems.

# Respondents are most concerned that their workload will increase in the next 12 months.

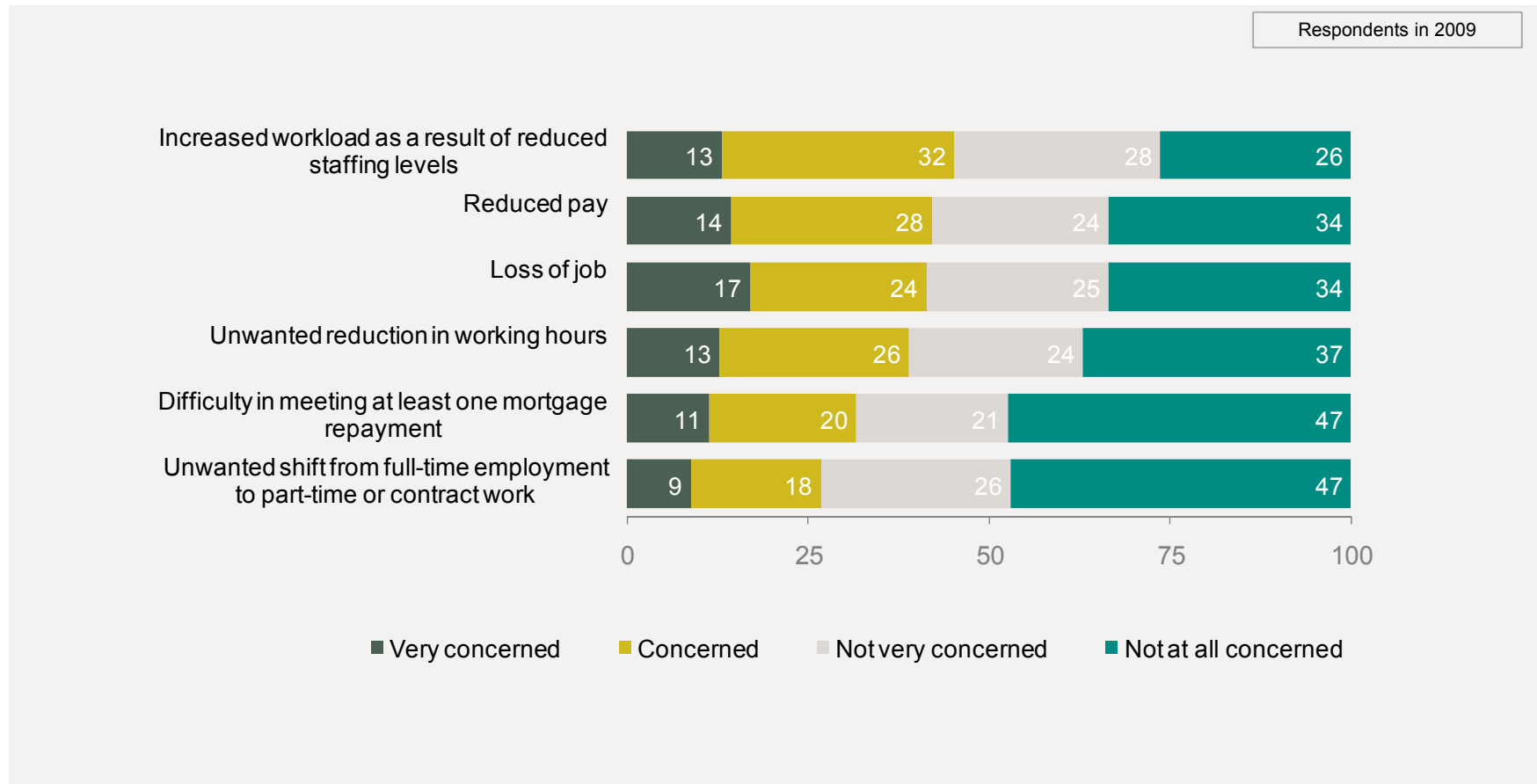


Respondents in 2010



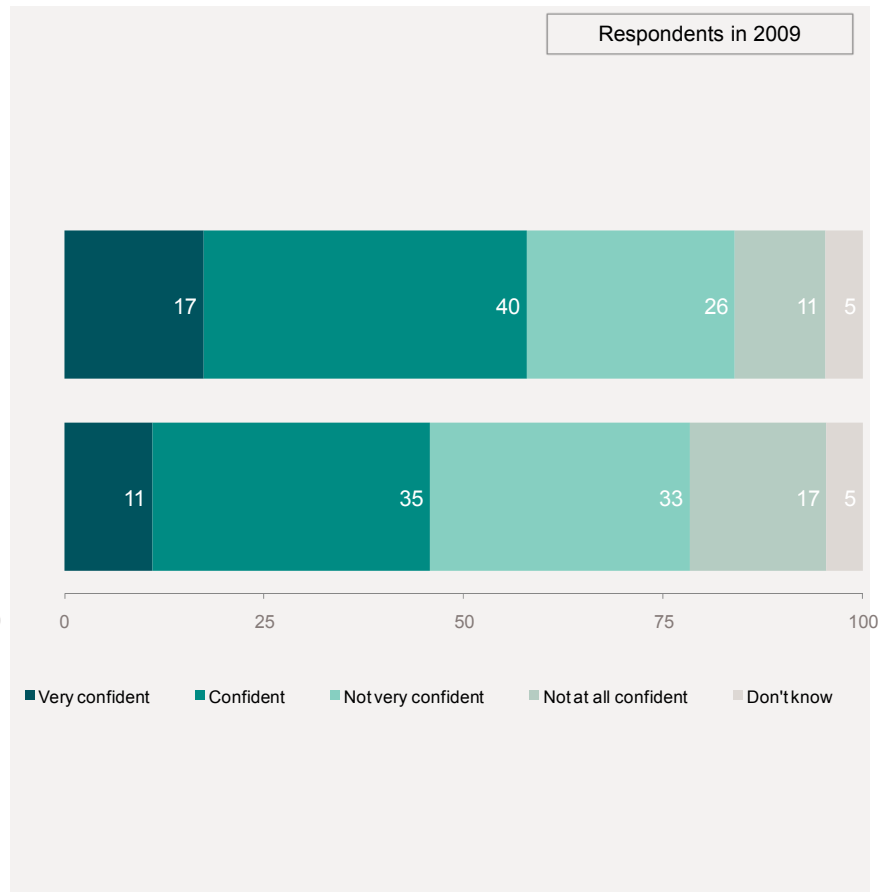
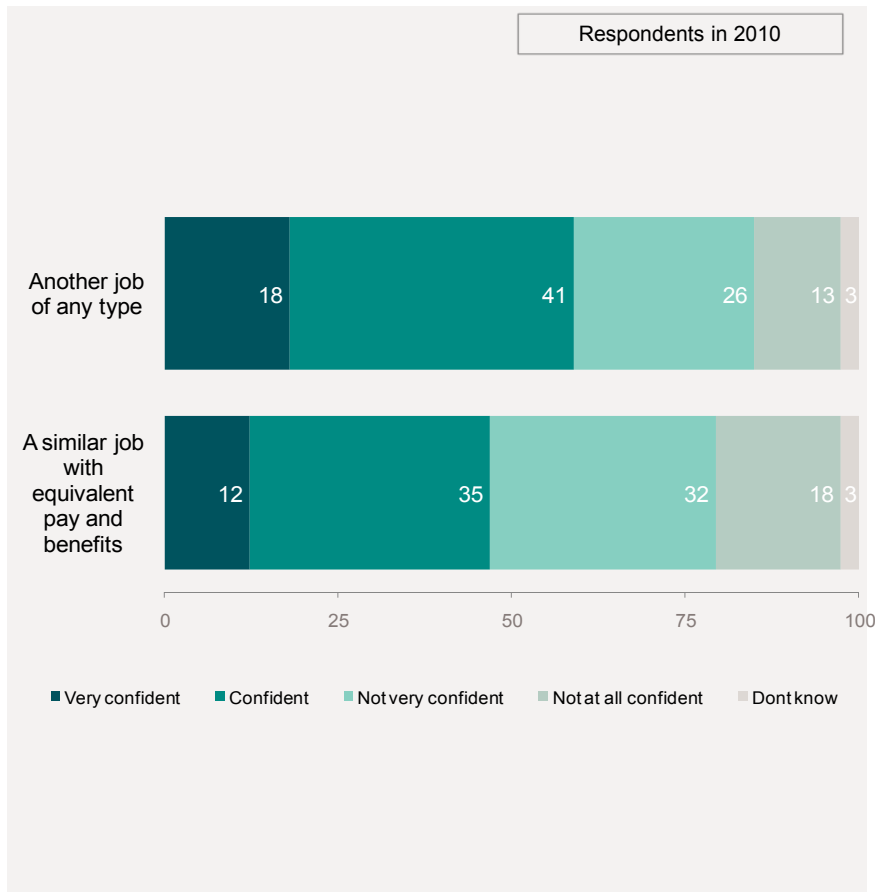
Pay cuts and job loss come next.

The order of concerns is the same as last year.



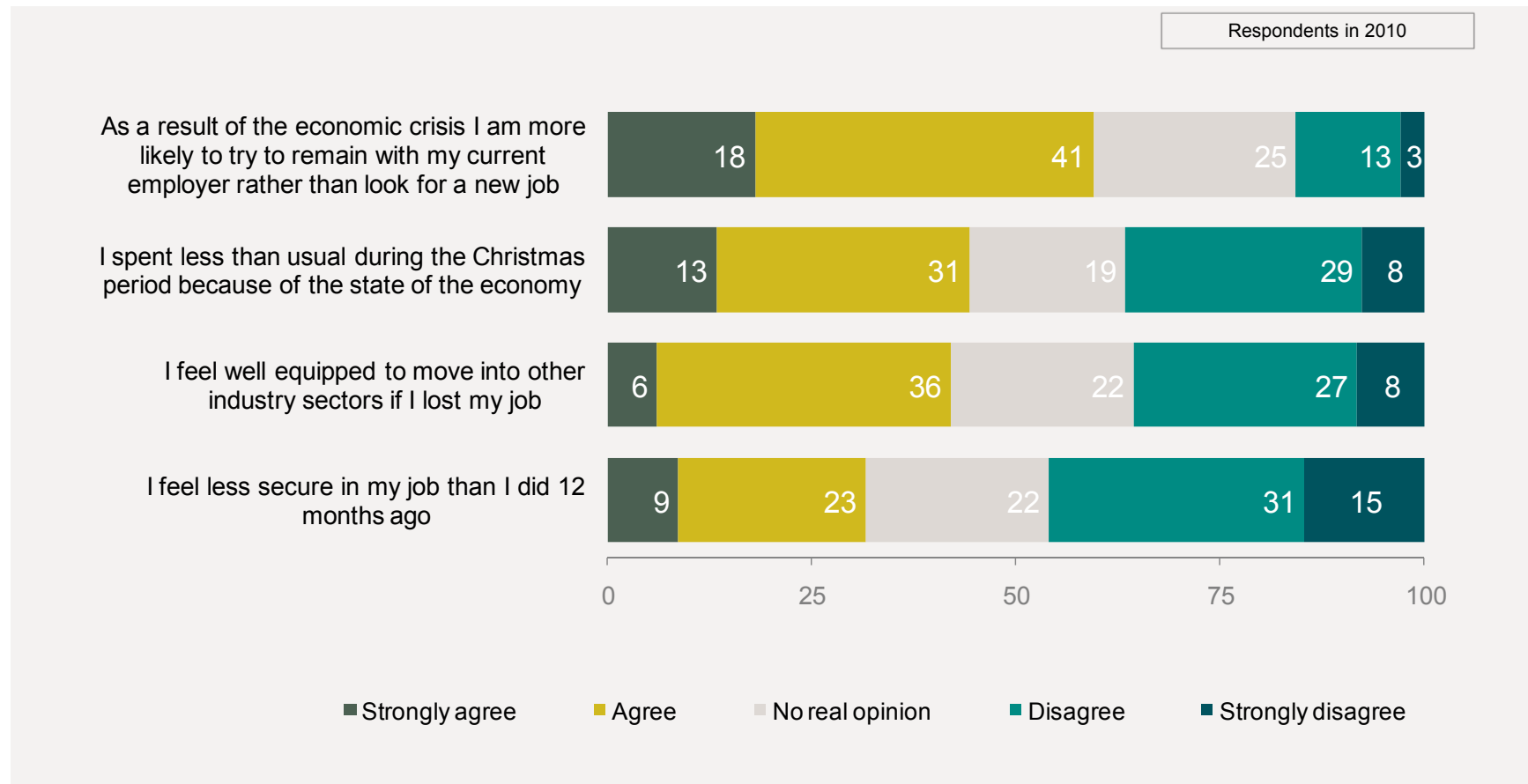
The magnitude of these concerns is similar to last year as well.

Two-fifths of workers are not confident that if they lost their job they could find another one. This has barely changed from last year.



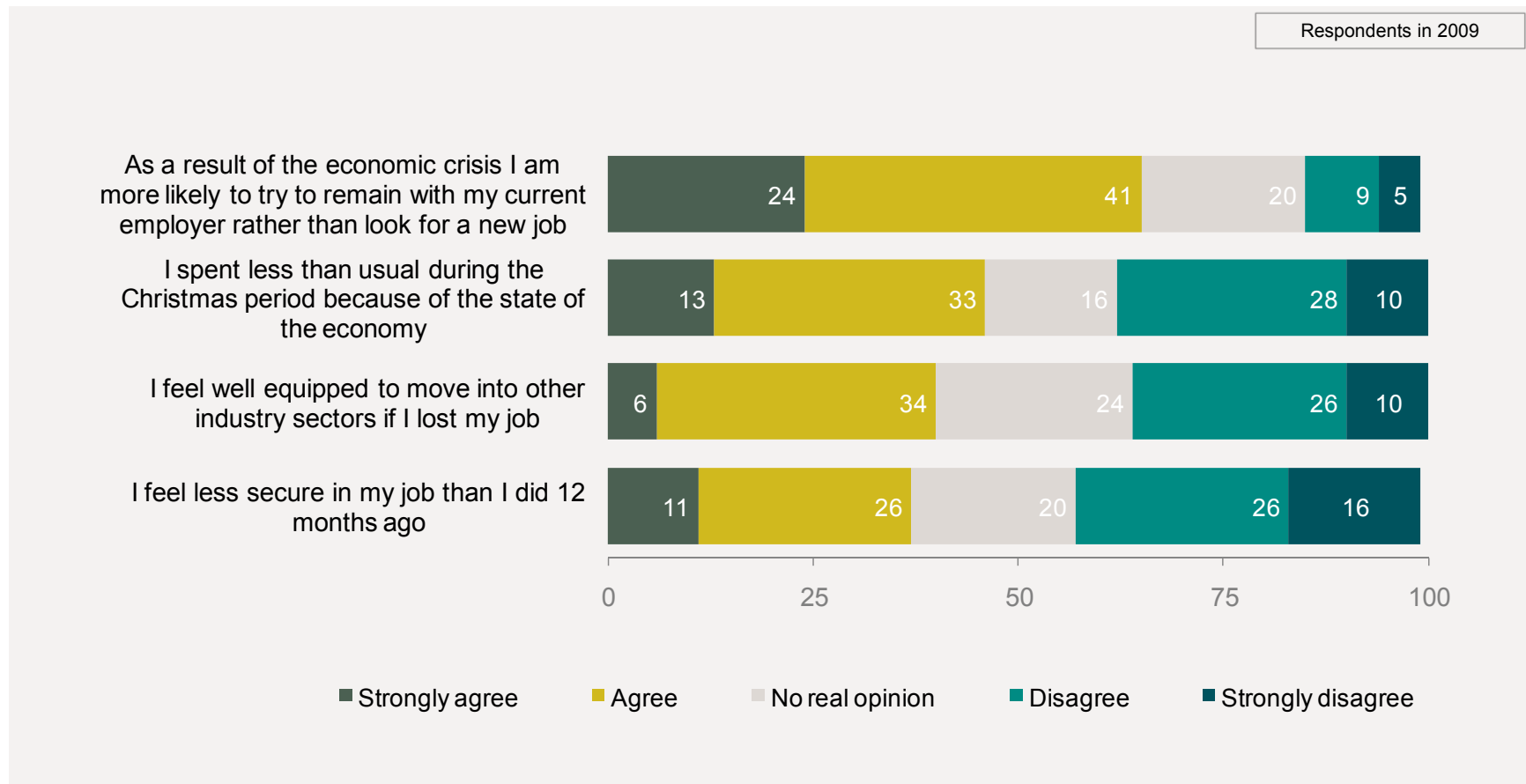
Fewer than half are confident they could find a job with similar pay and benefits.

# Workers still overwhelmingly say they are likely to stick with their employer because of the economic climate.



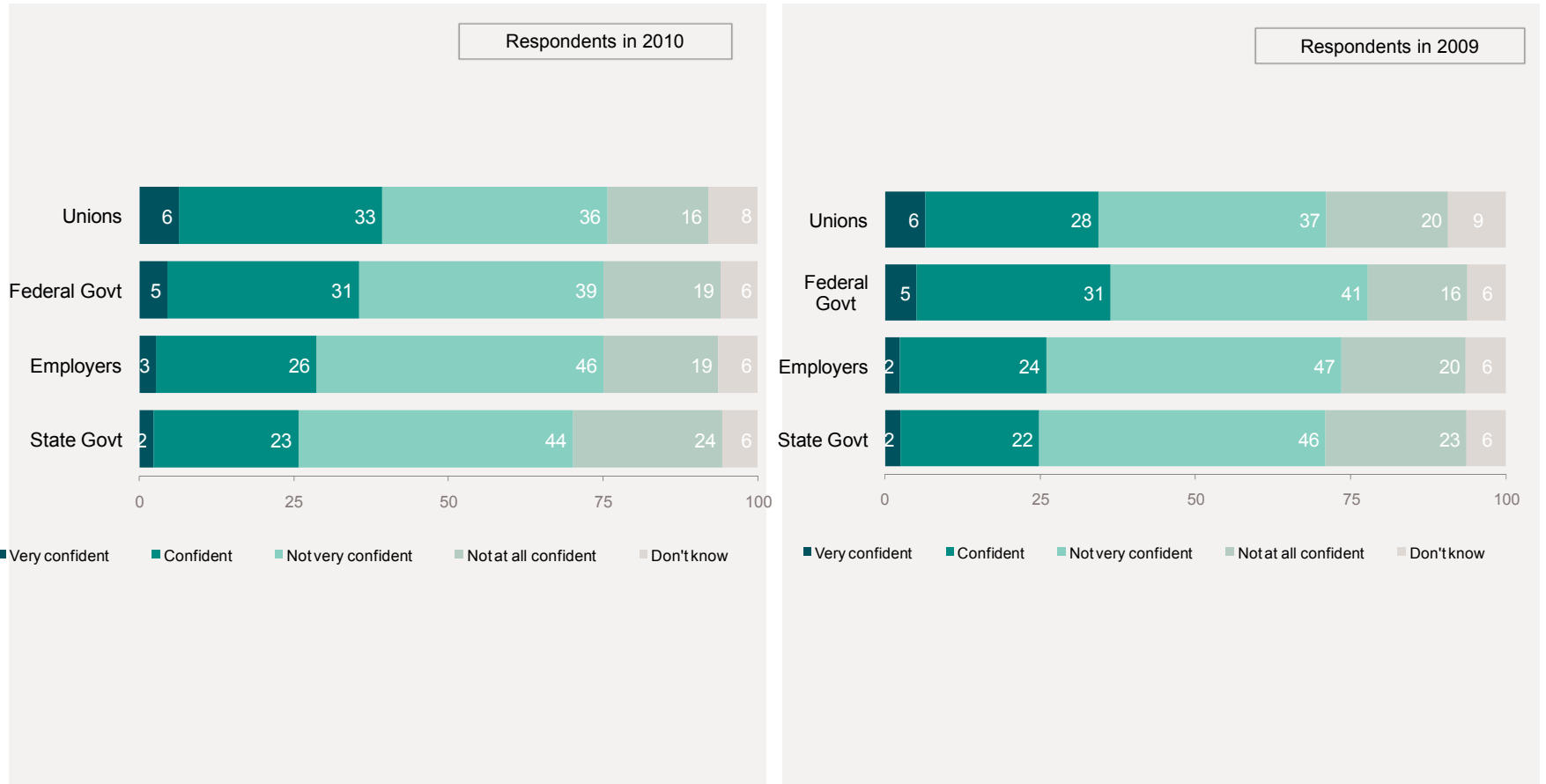
In addition, almost one third of workers feel less secure in their jobs than when the survey was last taken twelve months ago.

However, fewer workers are planning to stick with their employer than a year ago.



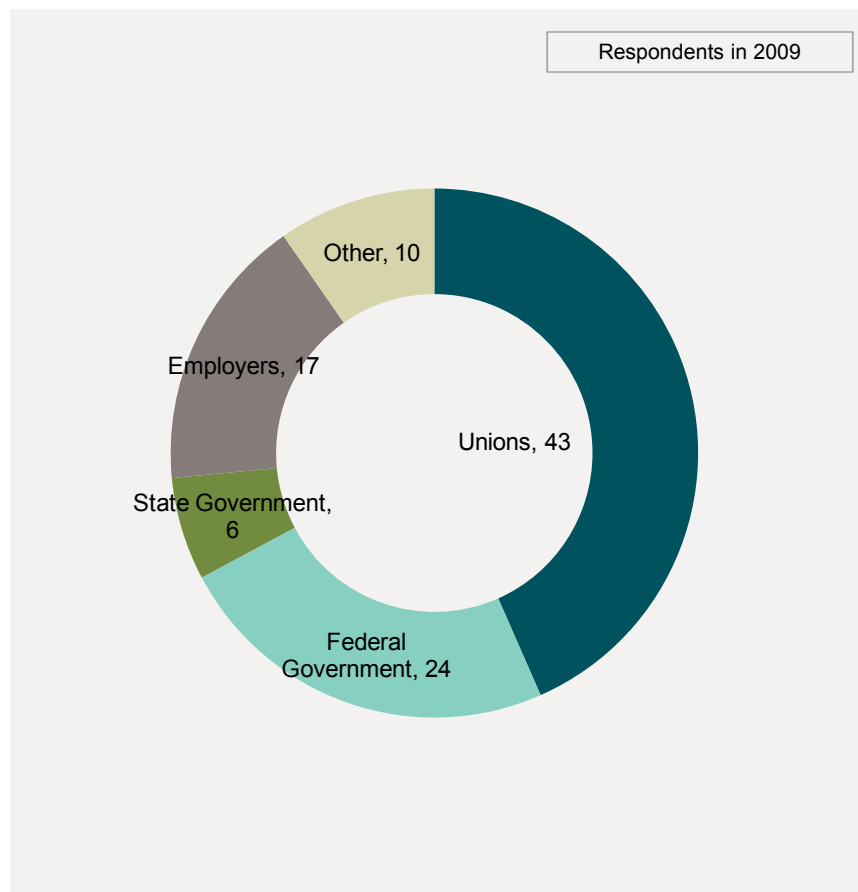
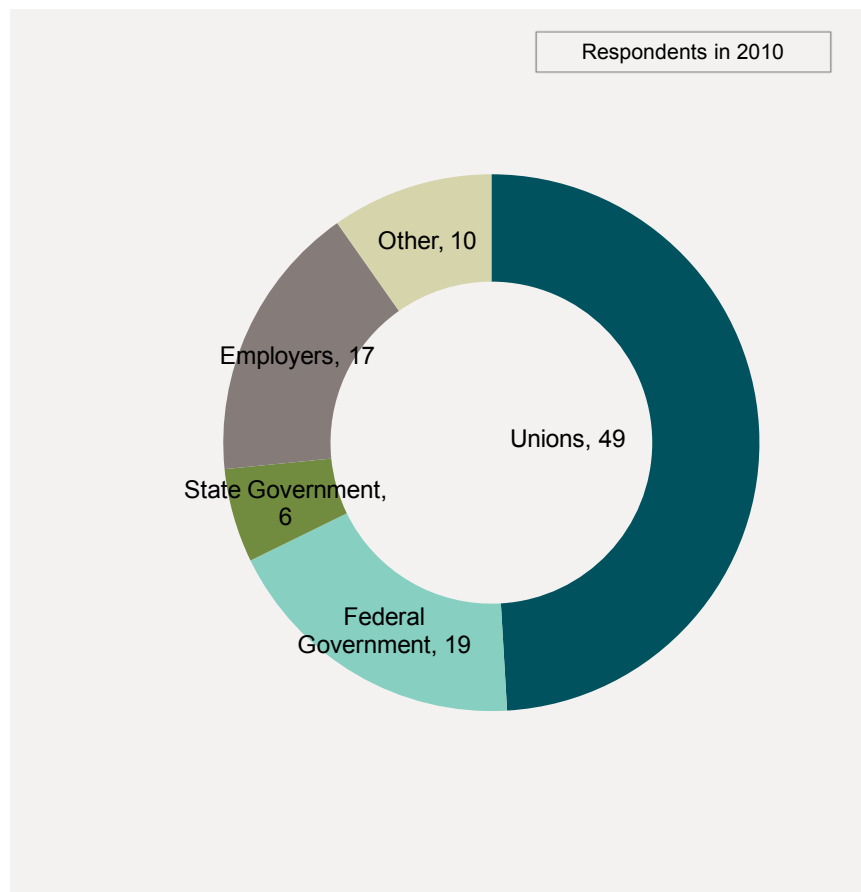
Other work-related problems (workload etc) have not improved in the last year.

# Respondents are more confident that unions will protect the interests of workers compared to any other group



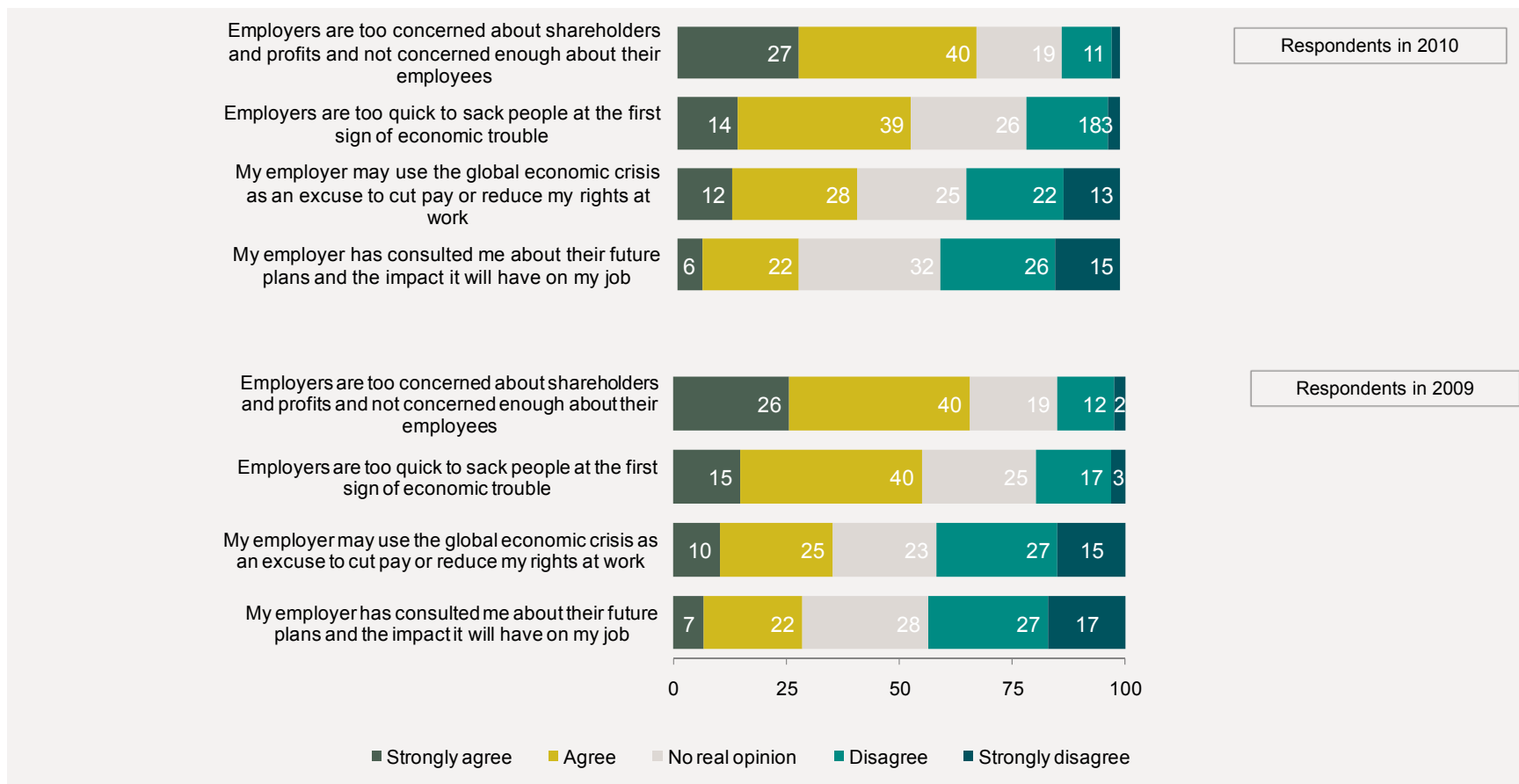
However, only two fifths of respondents are confident that unions will protect the interests of workers, though confidence in other groups is even lower.

# More workers than last year say that unions are the most likely group to act in the interests of workers



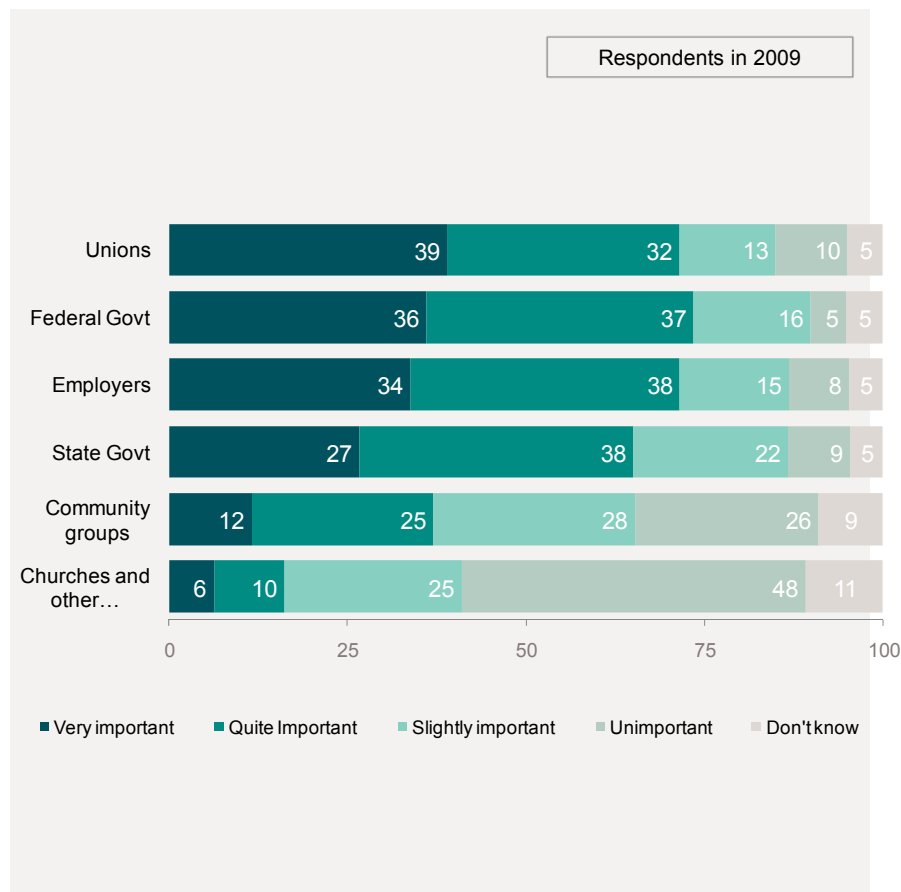
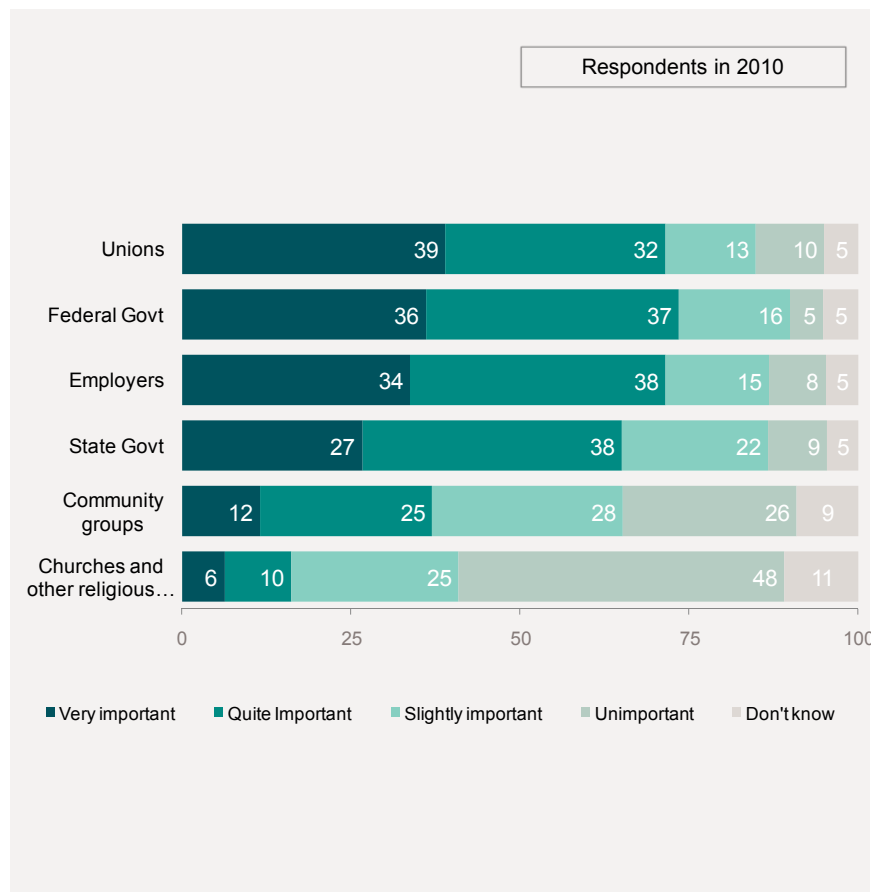
- ▶ The proportion naming the federal government has fallen somewhat since last year.
- ▶ Once again, state governments inspire the lowest level of confidence.

# Attitudes to employers remain very similar to last year. Two-thirds still believe employers care too much about profits.



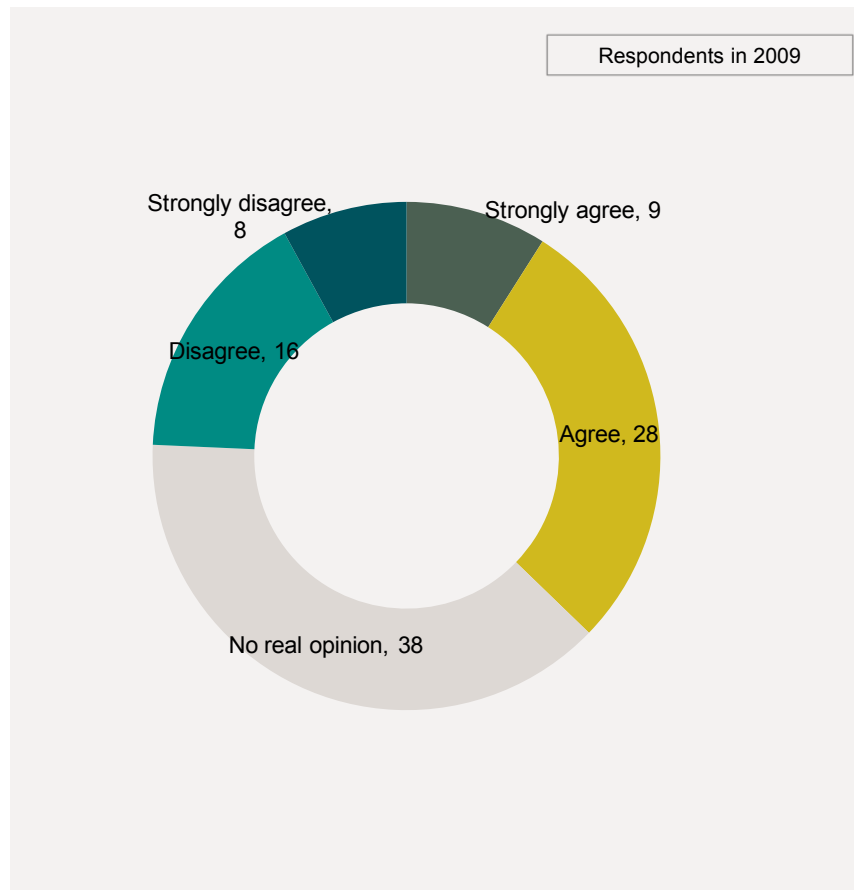
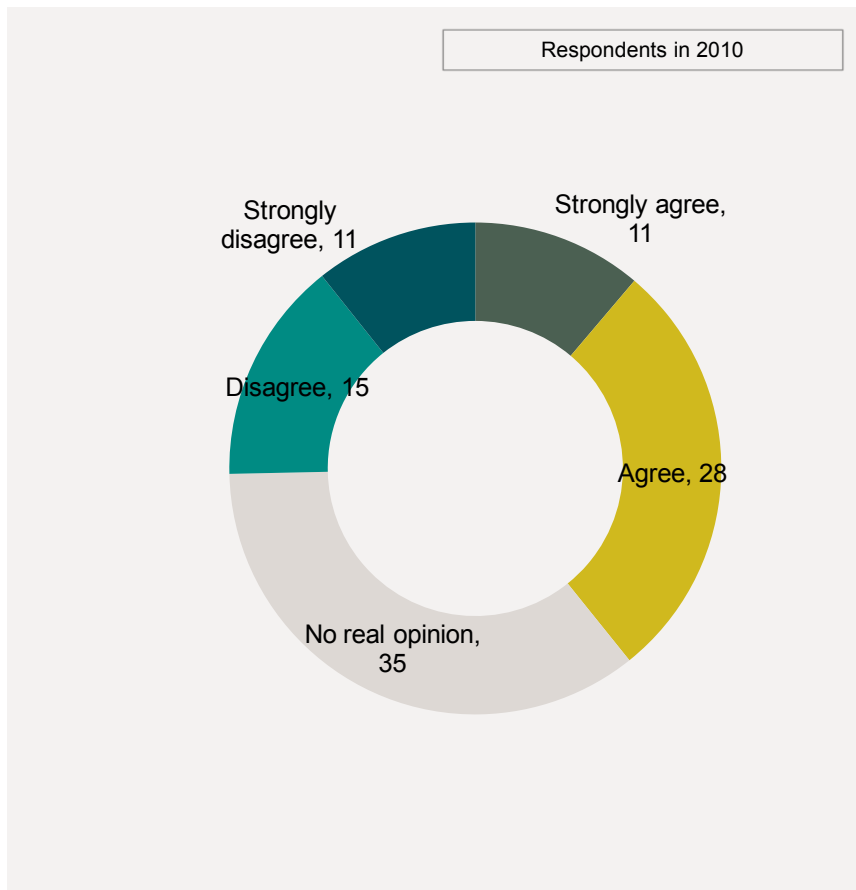
In addition, over half of workers believe employers are too quick to sack people, and less than a third have been consulted by employers about their future plans.

# Respondents are more likely to be very confident in unions than in other any institution.



However, workers express similar levels of confidence in the federal government and employers. This pattern is also observed last year.

# Around two-fifths of workers believe the GFC has made unions more relevant

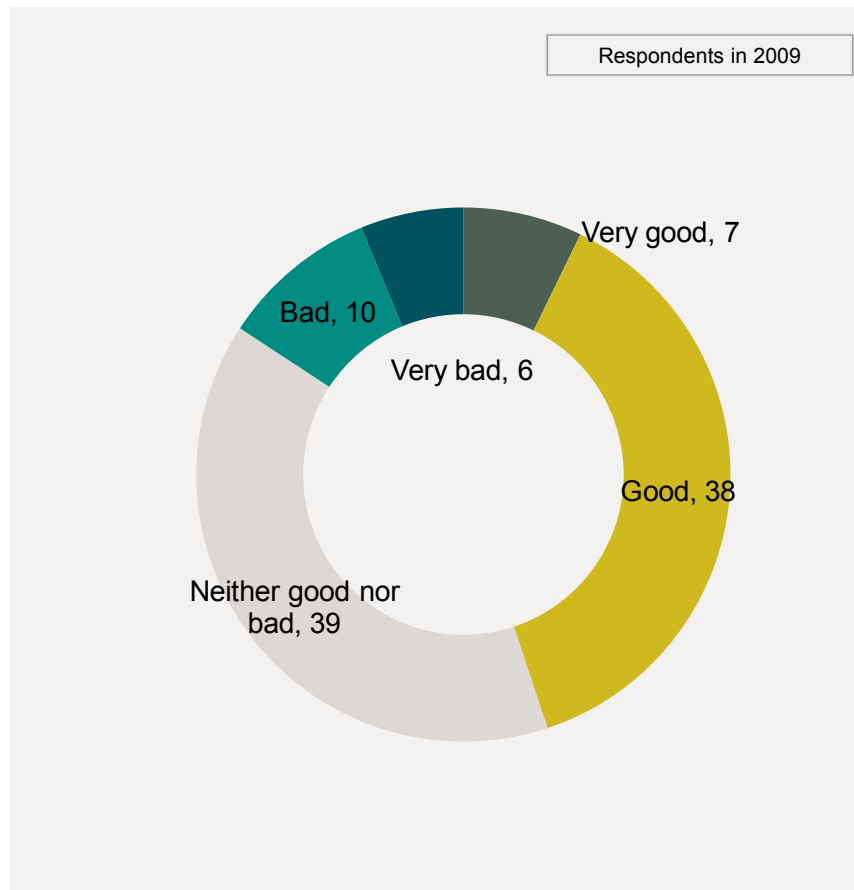
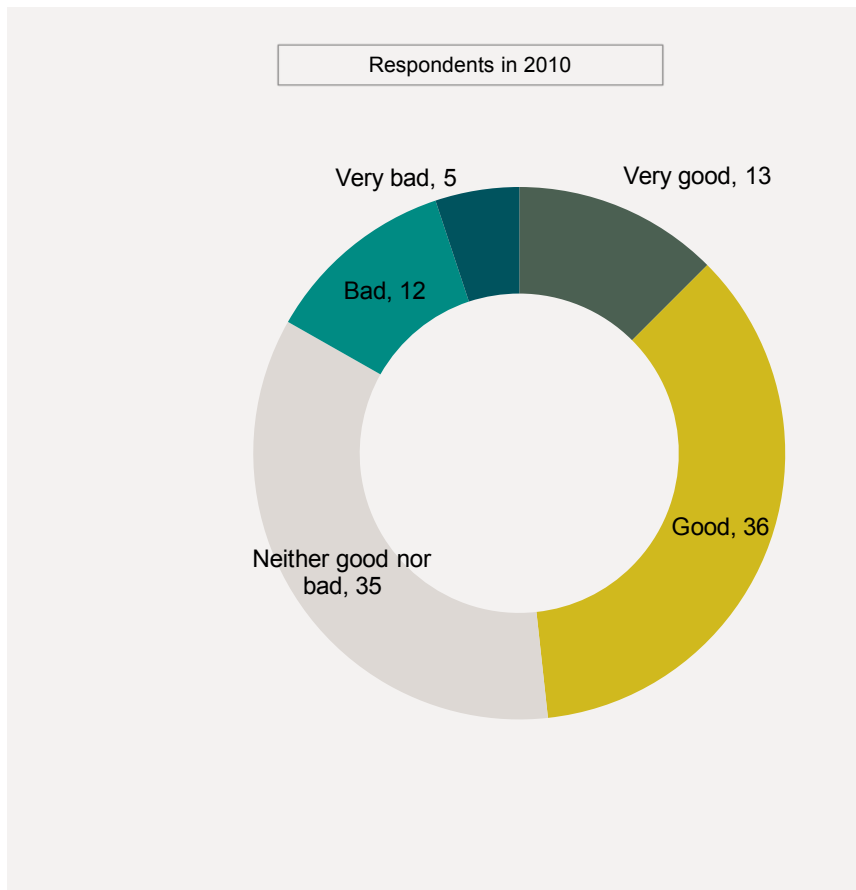


- ▶ A quarter of workers disagree that unions have been made more relevant.
- ▶ These proportions are very similar to last year.



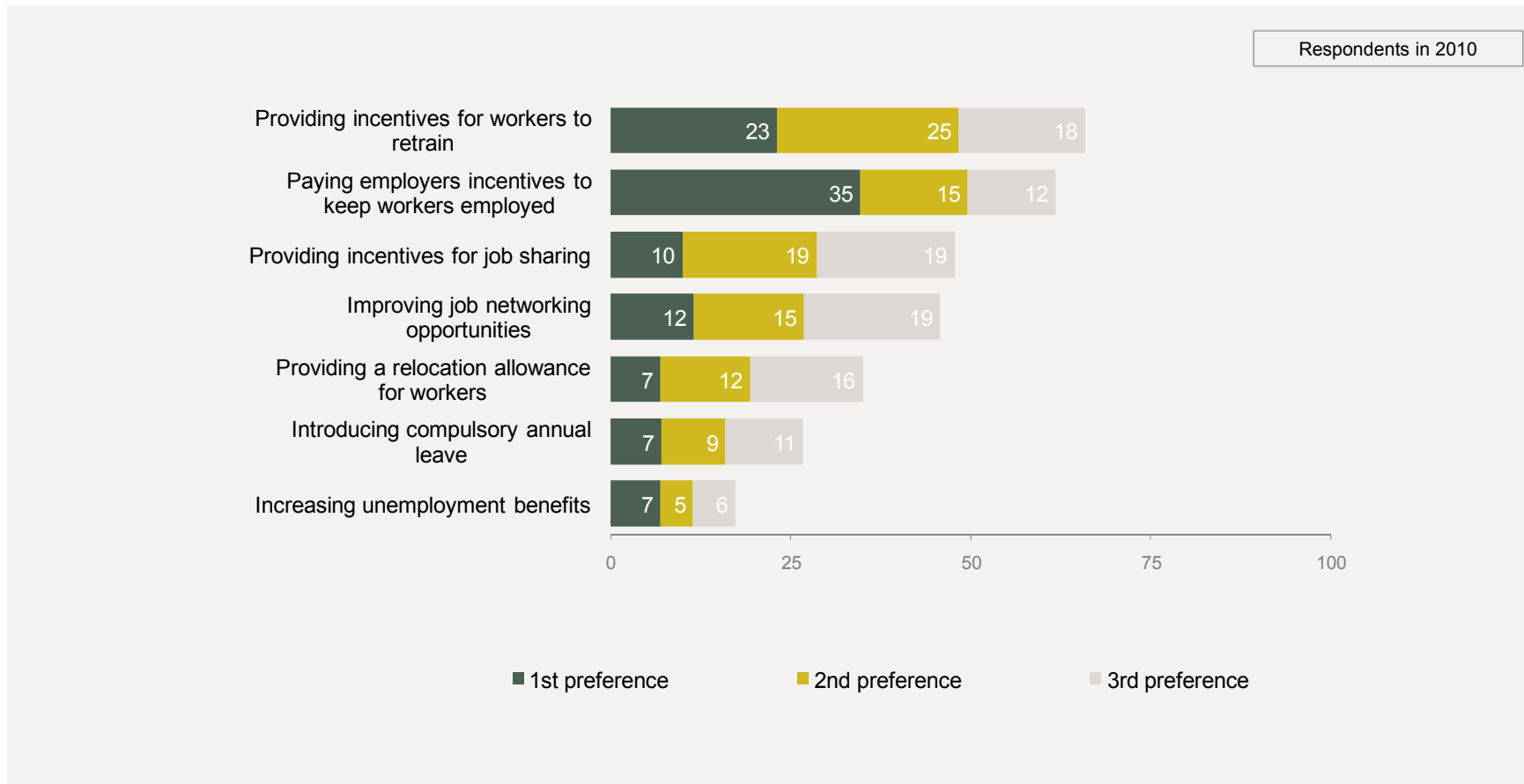
# Government policies

# The government's response to the GFC is viewed somewhat more positively than it was last year



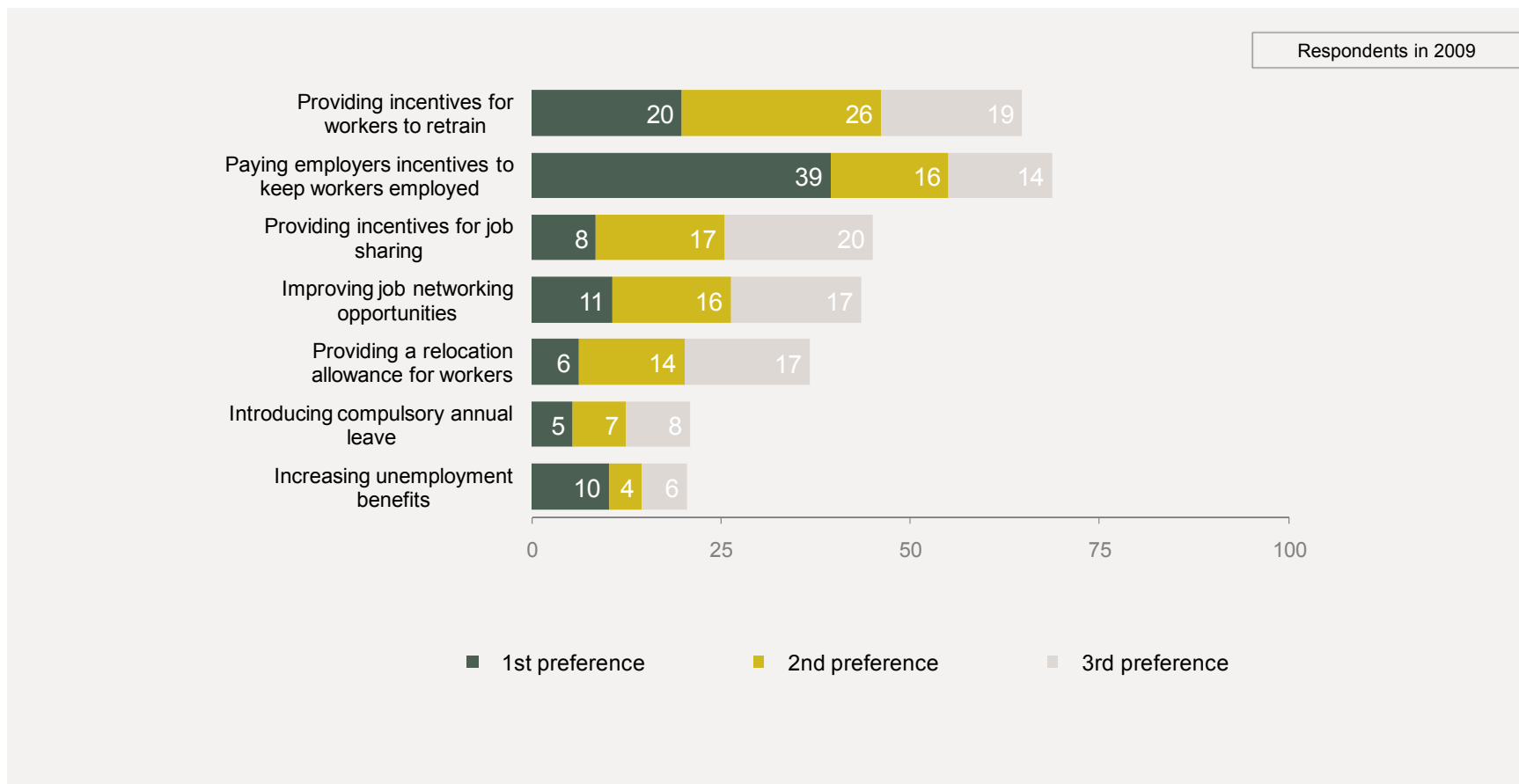
This year almost half of respondents say the government's response was good or very good.

The most important actions government could take are incentives for workers to retrain and paying employers to keep workers.



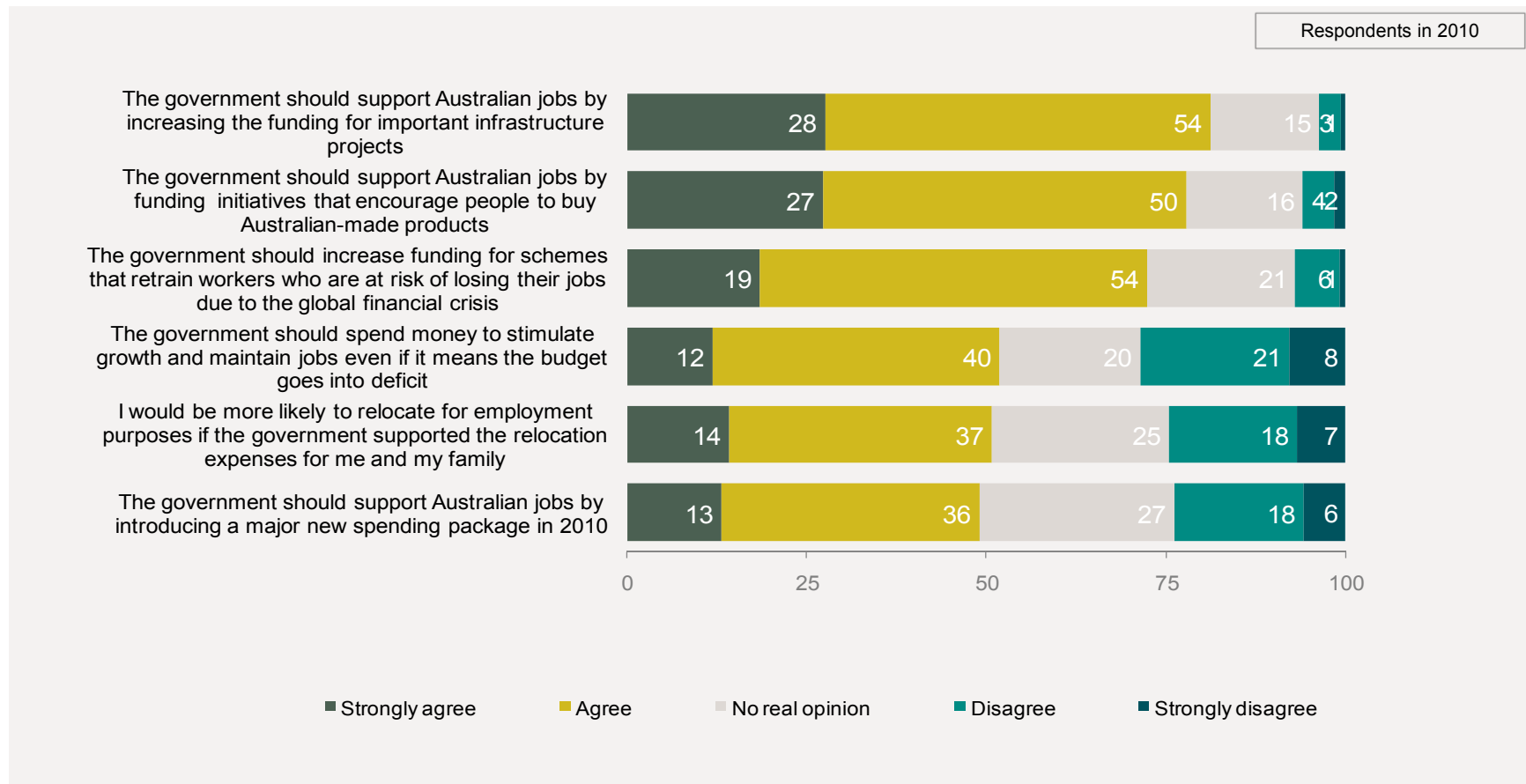
Increasing unemployment benefits is the least popular policy tested by some distance.

These are similar to last year, though the order of the top two is reversed.



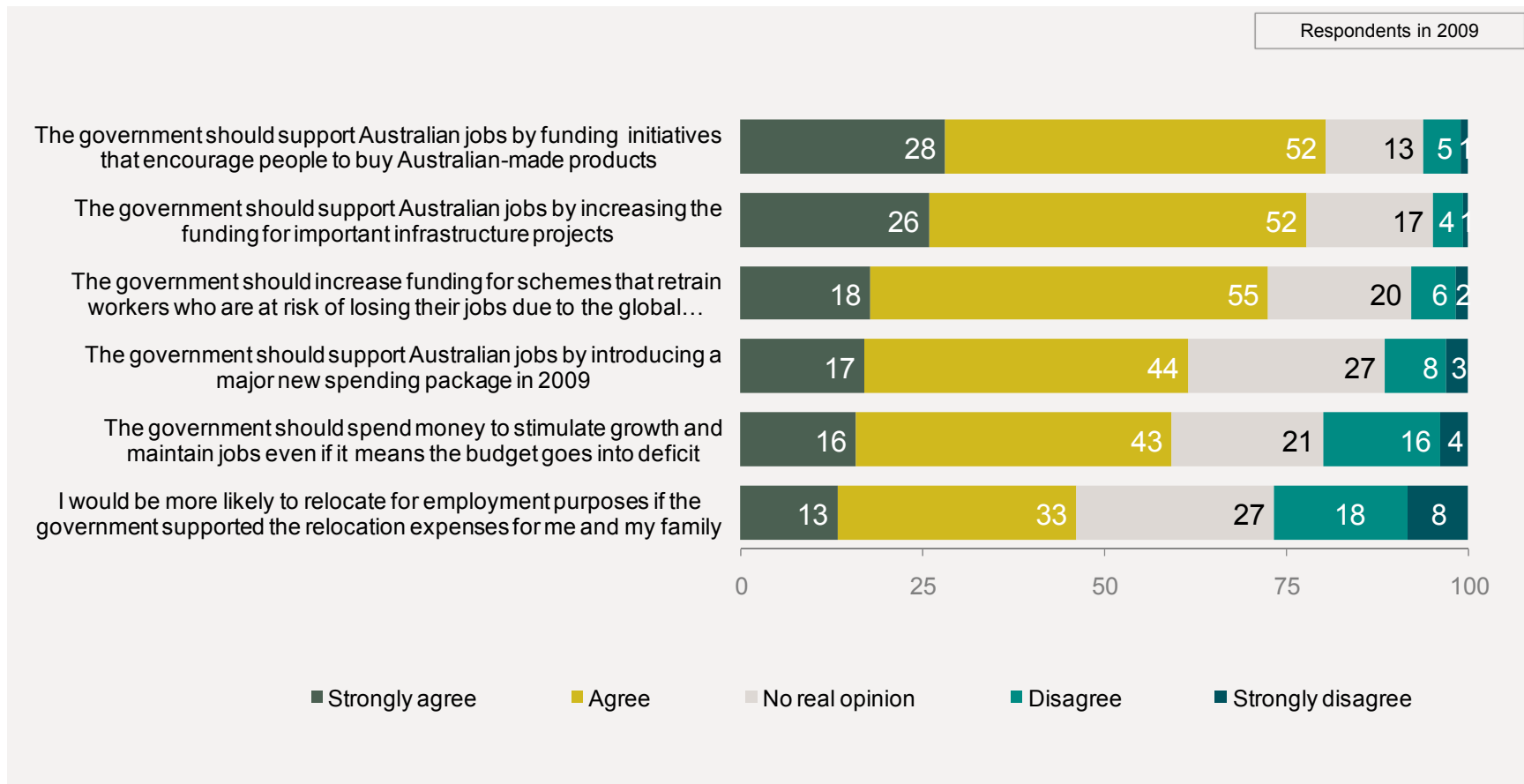
Increasing unemployment benefits remains the least popular option

# Funding for infrastructure and 'buy Australian' initiatives are the most popular government spending policies.



The least popular policy is a new spending package.

A new spending package and deficit spending are the only policies that have become markedly less popular in the last twelve months.



This is in keeping with workers' generally more optimistic view of the economy as a whole.



# Views on industrial relations

# Almost half of all workers believe that employees should have more protection of their pay and conditions

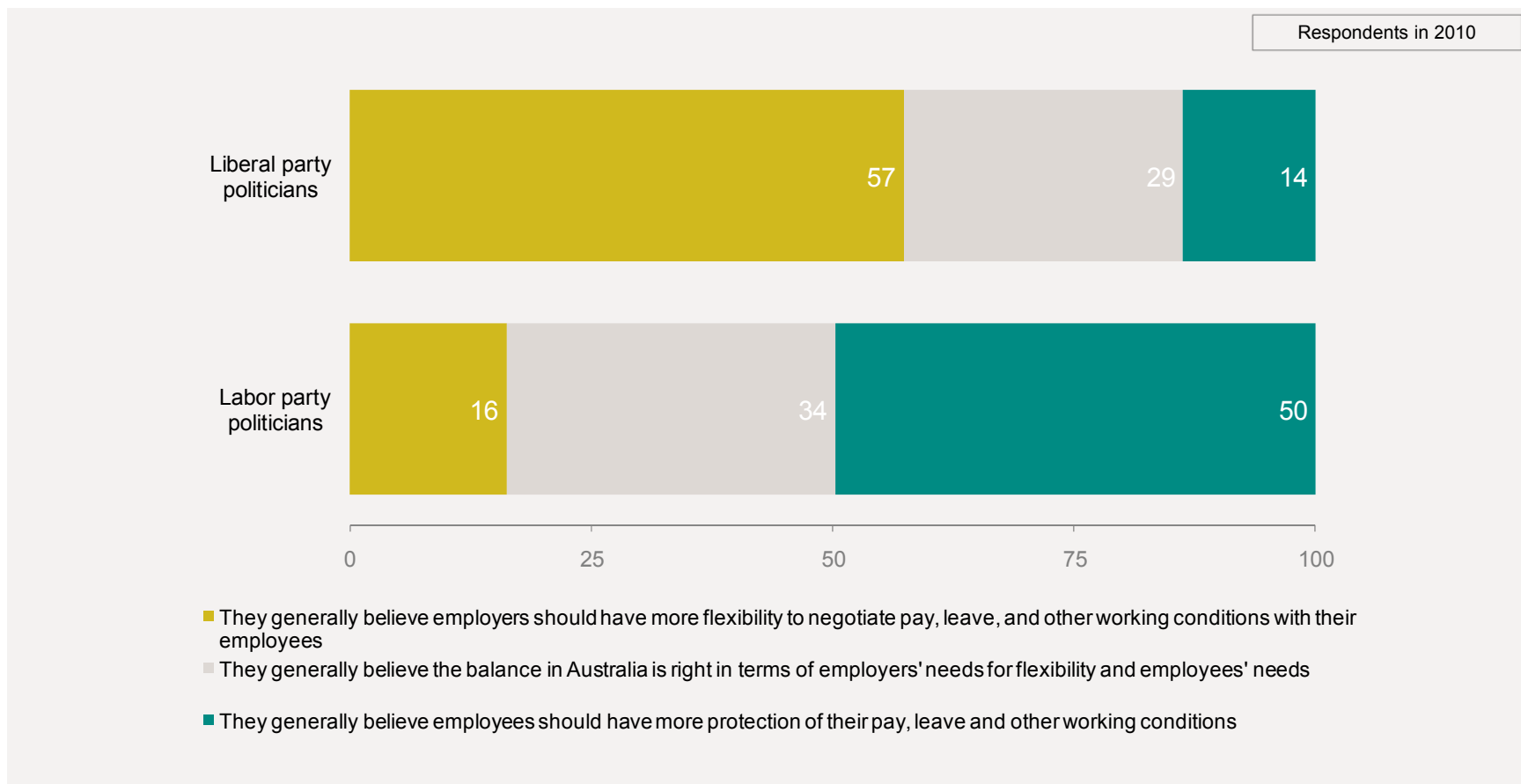


Respondents in 2010



Only one-fifth think employers need more flexibility.

# Australian workers see a very clear difference between the major parties on the issue of industrial relations

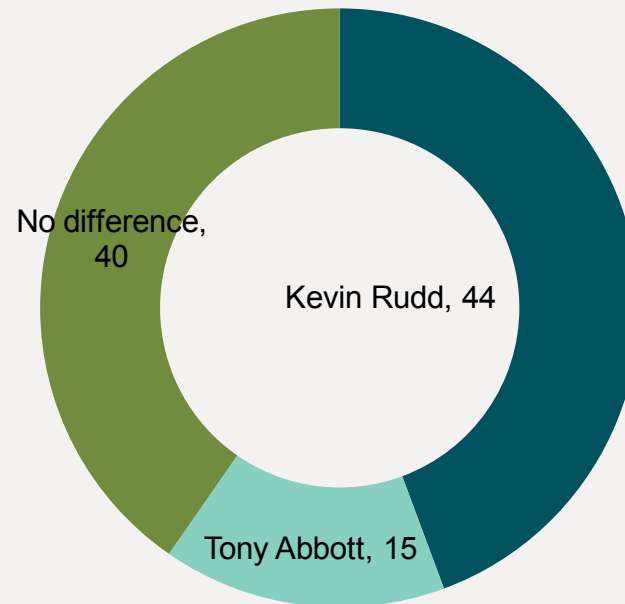


Workers are also more likely to believe that Labor politicians take the position that they themselves hold – namely that employees should have more protection

Three times as many workers believe that Kevin Rudd would do a better job at protecting their conditions than Tony Abbott



Respondents in 2010



However, two-fifths believe there is no difference between the leaders on this issue.



# Appendix: sample characteristics

# Age and gender



Sample sub-segment	# in sample	% of sample
Male	685	54
Female	575	46
18 to 29	275	22
30 to 39	280	22
40 to 49	278	22
50 to 59	278	22
60 +	149	12

# Industry



Industry	# in sample	% of sample
Accom., Café and Restaurant	35	3
Agricultural	34	3
Communications	35	3
Construction	69	5
Cultural & Recreational	8	1
Defence	7	1
Education	100	8
Electricity, Gas and Water	15	1
Finance and Insurance	77	6
Government	93	7
Health & Community Services	165	13
Manufacturing	74	6
Mining	29	2
Property	16	1
Retail Trade	158	13
Transport and Storage	62	5
Wholesale Trade	29	2
Other	254	20

# Work status



Sample sub-segment	# in sample	% of sample
Full time permanent	735	58
Part time permanent	90	7
Full time casual	237	19
Part time casual	198	16
Employee	1062	84
Self-employed	198	16
Blue collar	328	26
White collar	657	52
Union member	260	21
Not union member	1000	79

# Family structure



Sample sub-segment	# in sample	% of sample
Single with dependent children at home	74	6
Single without dependent children at home	303	24
Married/de facto with dependent children at home	389	31
Married/de facto without dependent children at home	427	34
Other	67	5

# Home ownership



Sample sub-segment	# in sample	% of sample
Own home with a mortgage	533	42
Own home without a mortgage	290	23
Rent home	340	27
Other	97	8

# Household income



Income	# in sample	% of sample
\$1 - \$9,999	9	1
\$10,000 - \$19,999	17	1
\$20,000 - \$29,999	84	7
\$30,000 - \$39,999	104	8
\$40,000 - \$49,999	115	9
\$50,000 - \$59,999	108	9
\$60,000 - \$69,999	110	9
\$70,000 - \$79,999	117	9
\$80,000 - \$89,999	90	7
\$90,000 - \$99,999	83	7
\$100,000 - \$109,999	75	6
\$110,000 - \$119,999	47	4
\$120,000 - \$129,999	44	3
\$130,000 - \$139,999	19	2
\$140,000 - \$149,999	32	3
\$150,000 or more	89	7
Did not want to say	117	9

Campaign. Intelligently