

# Phase 2 – Wave 1

## Household Assistance Package

...communication campaign research

Department of Families,  
Housing, Community  
Services and Indigenous  
Affairs

**Final report** document  
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Household Assistance Package Communications Research - Phase 2

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# Summary of research intent – Phase 2, Wave 1

## Background to the research

As part of the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future (CEF) Plan, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) is responsible for communicating on aspects of the assistance to be provided to Australian households through the introduction of a carbon price. As a result, millions of Australians will receive increased payments, tax cuts or both, in the form of the Household Assistance Package (HAP).

There are three new types of payments, in the form of increases in pensions, allowances and family payments that comprise the HAP:

- Clean Energy Advance and Clean Energy Supplement
- Low Income Supplement
- Single Income Family Supplement

Additionally, low income earners will receive income tax cuts. The details of each payment type are specified in the Brief, and are not repeated herein.

Phase 1 of the campaign launched in May 2012, to clarify to recipients the nature and purpose of the initial advance payments. Phase 2 of the campaign will launch in July 2012 with a focus on changes to the tax free threshold and tax cuts for low and middle income earners. The same creative concept will be applied across all phases to ensure a consistent approach, however separate executions will be required for each phase.

There is a need for the campaign to inform audiences of the tax changes and its effect on their personal situation, to manage the factual information needs of millions of Australians and mitigate public confusion.

To this end, FaHCSIA developed a communication strategy to drive an information campaign, raising awareness and understanding of the elements included within the 'Household Assistance Package'. This strategy will focus on communicating the assistance measures of the HAP to those who will benefit from it.

## Objectives of this research

FaHCSIA has commissioned the development of creative concepts to communicate the details and benefits of Phase 2 of the HAP and now requires a research consultant to undertake testing research for these concepts. Specifically, the research will:

- address any 'gaps' in FaHCSIA's existing understanding of target audiences and their communication needs, barriers and preferences;
- ensure proposed campaign advertisements and information products are appropriate for target audiences and deliver key messages clearly and effectively;
- assess any risks associated with campaign materials, including how they might be received by people who will not be eligible for a payment.

The research needs to test a range of advertisements and information products with target audiences, as well as a broader public, and evaluate their appropriateness and effectiveness in meeting the aims and objectives of the HAP communication strategy. The consultant will be required to make recommendations to FaHCSIA about what, if any, changes are required to ensure advertisements and information products will meet the objectives of the HAP communication strategy.

## Target audiences

Primary target audiences are defined as those who are either eligible for assistance or require a call to action (apply for the low income supplements) to receive assistance under the various Household Assistance Package measures, primarily low-middle income families, seniors, people with disability and carers.

The **Primary audiences** for Phase Two are people who are **eligible for a tax cut** (taxpayers with annual income below \$80,000) and those eligible for the low income supplement.

Secondary target audiences are those who were eligible for Phase 1 payments, and remaining Australians who will not be eligible for assistance under the HAP measures.



# Summary of research method – Phase 2, Wave 1

They key component of the methodology of Phase 2 Wave 1 is **n=28 standard (60 minute) focus groups**. In stratifying the focus groups, the following structure was applied. Other details:

- The regional location utilised we Geelong, Bunbury and Parramatta.
- 2 group was recruited with a specific CALD / Aboriginal focus – Groups W1\_11, W1\_20.
- 8 participants were recruited for each group, and on average, 7 or 8 were present in each group.
- An incentive of \$70 was paid to each participant.
- All groups were moderated by senior researchers with a minimum of 8 years experience.
- Participants were required to complete written 'rating sheets' (short surveys) of the concepts prior to the group discussion to control for potential 'group-effect' throughout the analysis.
- The presentation of 'press' and 'radio' was rotated in presentation to minimise order effect.
- Full analysis was undertaken on each group and integrated into reporting.
- All groups were conducted between 25 and 29 May 2012.

number	Location		Low / middle income (did not receive CEA)			Out of system		Non recipients		Phase 1 recipients			
	Metropolitan	Regional / rural	18-29 years	30-49 years	50+ years	Self funded retiree (age 60- pension)	Self employed tax loss	18-39 years	40+ years	Family support	Age pensions	Unemployment/study/other	Disability/carer
<b>Total</b>	20	8	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	3	3
W1_1	Syd												1
W1_2	Syd								1				
W1_3	Syd										1		
W1_4	Syd			1									
W1_5	Syd									1			
W1_6	Per									1			
W1_7	Per					1							
W1_8	Per										1		
W1_9	Per							1					
W1_10	Per		1										
W1_11	Brisb									CALD/AB			
W1_12	Brisb				1								
W1_13	Brisb												1
W1_14	Brisb							1					
W1_15	Brisb											1	
W1_16		VIC	1										
W1_17		VIC					1						
W1_18		VIC								1			
W1_19		NSW		1									
W1_20		NSW										CALD/AB	
W1_21		NSW									1		
W1_22	Melb											1	
W1_23	Melb										1		
W1_24	Melb				1								
W1_25	Melb					1							
W1_26	Melb												1
W1_27		WA					1						
W1_28		WA							1				

## A note on quasi-quantitative analysis charts

Throughout this report, there are several charts which detail quasi-quantitative analysis from rating sheets which participants completed as a part of their focus group attendance. These are qualitative samples, and thus, their interpretation must always be coupled with a qualitative assessment from more detailed feedback obtained from group participants throughout the discussions.

Any changes in the quasi-quantitative data from wave to wave should be viewed cautiously, and the intent of their inclusion is to:

1. **Identify whether there are any 'extreme' and 'consistent' significant shifts** across the measures that would indicate a negative (or positive) impact of any of the creative and content changes between Waves ...rather than to identify small changes.
2. **Determine whether the previously reported strengths of the "Fridge" concept** (and the rationale which underpinned its recommendation for progression) **have been maintained** throughout the waves.

In the cases where a movement in the quasi-quantitative charts are highlighted as indicative of 'change', this is because the finding was coupled with a strong and consistent sentiment expressed in the qualitative discussions (that is, it is not solely reliant on the quasi-quantitative ratings).



## **CALD and Aboriginal audiences**

It should be noted that, throughout the Phase 1 testing, the communications was received in a similar way among those of CALD and Aboriginal descent. There were no specific additional concerns raised by these audiences, aside from:

- a desire for the content to be translated, and targeted (in terms of placement in culturally relevant mediums).
- a noted desire for broader cultural representation (while simultaneously recognising the difficulty to achieve this within one TVC).

# The starting point ...

For the majority ...

**awareness** of  
HAP seemed  
indicatively  
higher than  
Phase 1

... particularly  
among Phase 1  
recipients

... but, there was  
some confusion with  
other budgetary  
elements noted.

...communication is still about **opportunity**

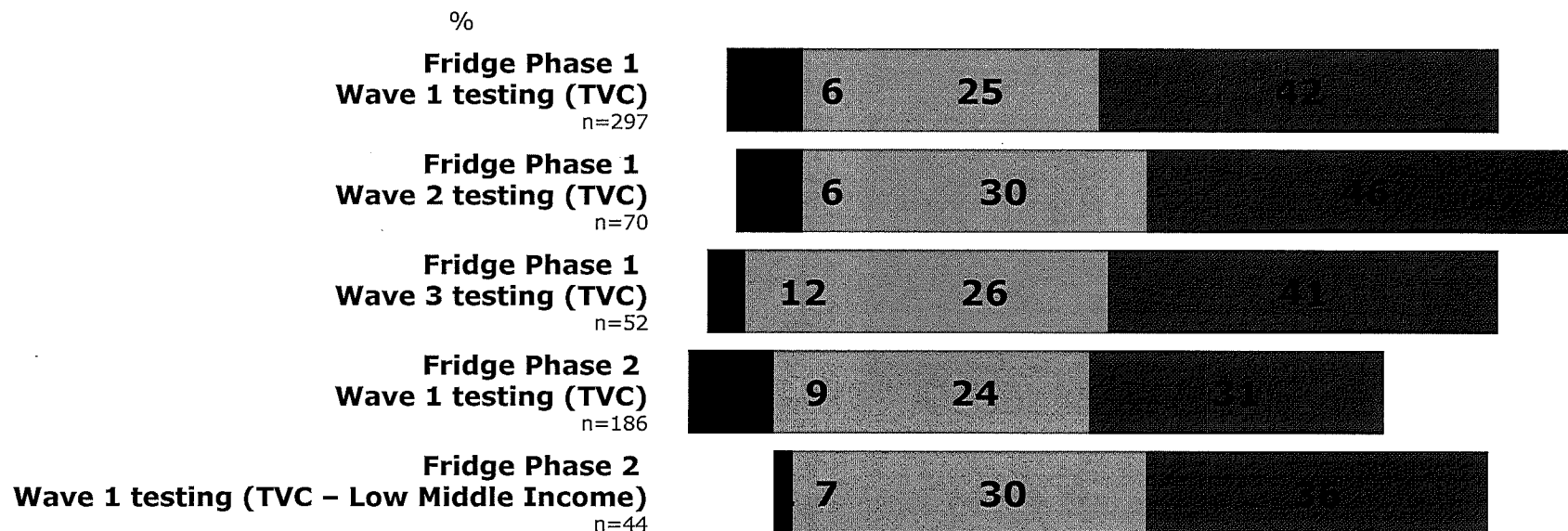
**1.** It does *not* appear necessary to redirect existing negative perceptions or address confusion

**2.** It remains necessary to generate knowledge and provide education- content!

The majority of participants continue to consider the communications an **appropriate** form of Government communications (a 'normal' level of negative reactions has remained unchanged between Phase 1 and Phase 2).

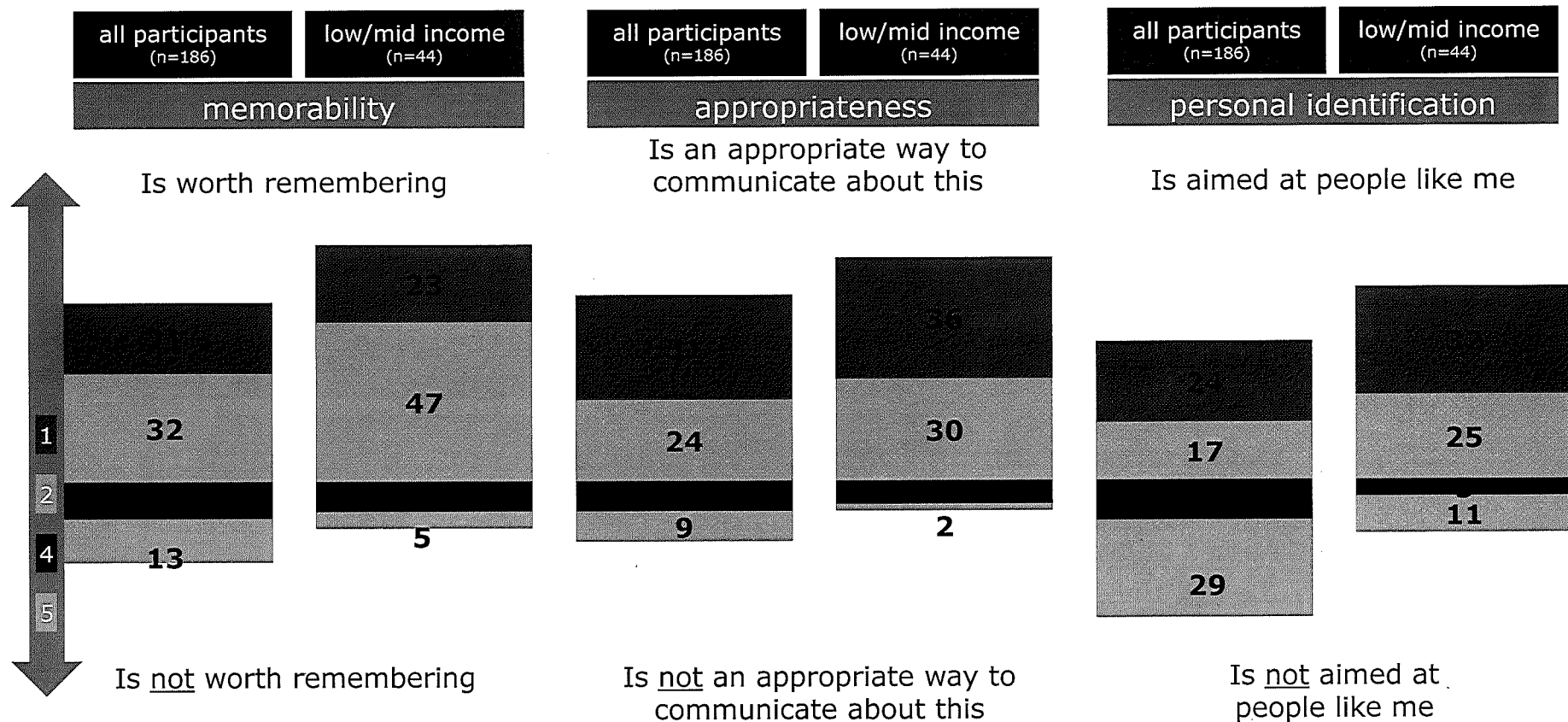
**Proportion who agree with:** Is not an appropriate way to communicate about this

**Proportion who agree with:** Is an appropriate way to communicate about this



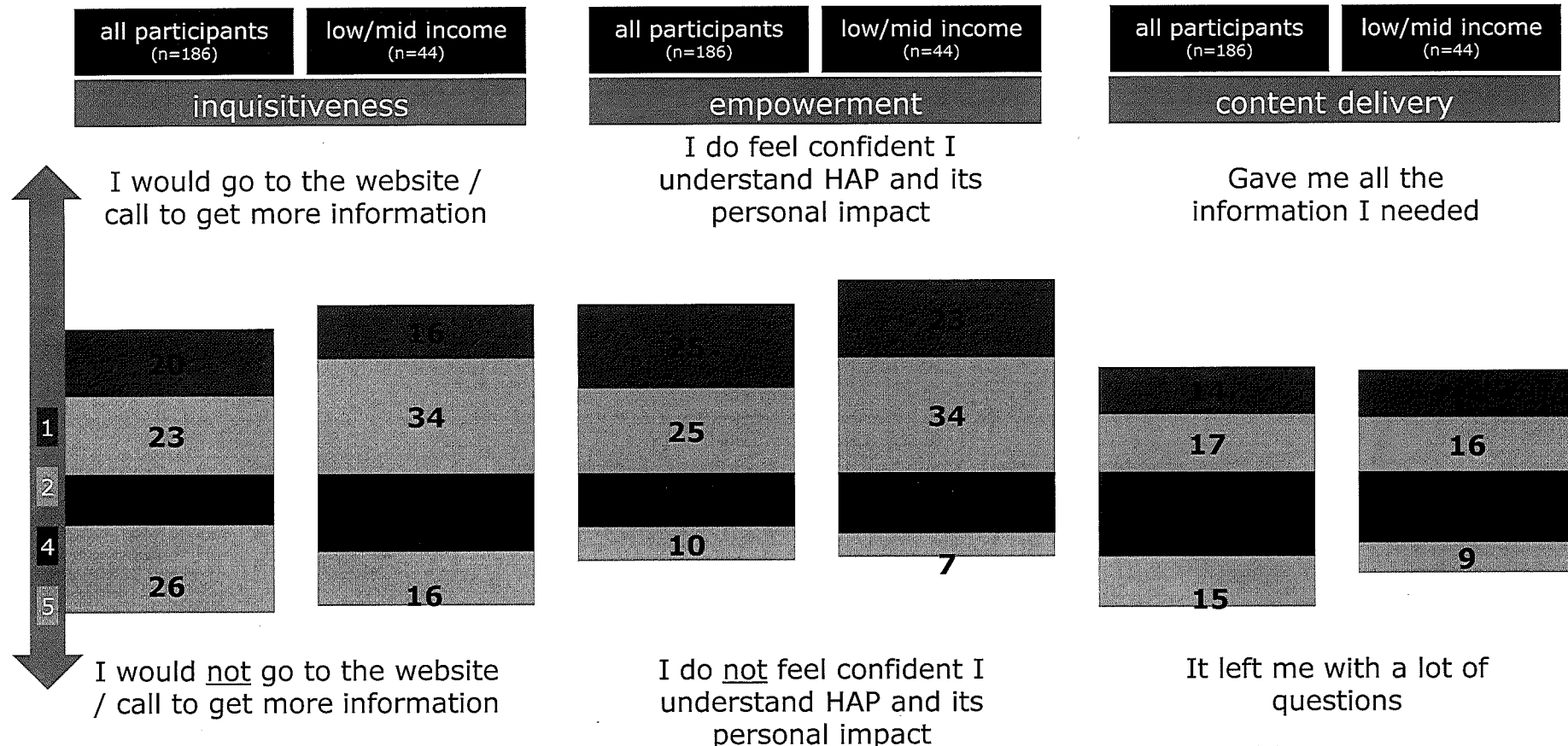
SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it.

The Phase 2 “Fridge” TVC is considered **memorable**, and **appropriate** ...but, is (not unexpectedly) considerably stronger among the primary target audience – particularly in terms of **personal identification**.



SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it. BASE: Wave 3, n=52

It is currently polarised in terms of likelihood to inspire **inquisitiveness** ...however, this did not mean there were 'unanswered questions' (as highlighted in the '**content delivery**' measure, and discussed later in recommendations).



SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it. BASE: Wave 3, n=52

# Phase 2 learnings and recommendations around creative and message ...



## creative elements...

1

Visual cues within the '**house**' (TVC) will be interpreted very literally ...they should be selected carefully as they have the potential to 'include' and 'exclude' target audiences

All groups referenced the 'type of house' depicted in the TVC concepts. Consistent focal points of discussion:

**the hallway:** lower / middle class consider are more likely to describe their houses as 'entering into the lounge room' and see a hallway as 'upper middle class'.

**the kitchen:** is considered 'aspirational' rather than 'reality' – in terms of size and perceived modernisation.

**the 'neatness':** is considered unrealistic, as many describe 'clutter' / 'normal mess'.

Generally, this is considered **inconsistent** with the 'benefitting those who need it most' reference ...the current depiction implies affluence.

In turn, this can raise **questions of eligibility** among some low income earners (tax payers who are further away from the \$80k threshold) – which risks that they will not consider themselves the target audience of the campaign.

### Recommendations:

The style of home and kitchen shown within the creative needs greater linkage to the target audience to facilitate their ability to 'relate' to the depictions.

**Consider:** Removing the hallway and enter directly into a living area?

**Consider:** A smaller kitchen which is not modernised (in terms of fixtures, as well as appliances).

**Consider:** Some visible 'everyday clutter' (eg. last night's pots and pans in sink; loaf of bread on bench; school lunch box etc) should be included.

## creative elements...

2

Visual cues of the '**people**' (TVC) will be interpreted very literally ...they should be selected carefully as they have the potential to 'include' and 'exclude' target audiences

All groups referenced the 'type of people' depicted in the TV concepts. Consistent focal points of discussion:

**the dynamic:** was considered too traditional 'nuclear family' (even for the couples only concept) ...and both concepts seem to drive perceptions of eligibility that are focussed on 'household', thereby alienating individuals

**the implied interactions of the teenage boy:** the son sitting in the kitchen was considered 'unrealistic' in terms of his being in a 'family space' (rather than a bedroom!), as well as completing homework in this environment (or, doing homework at all!)

**their perceived 'neatness':** depicted by their clothing which was considered unrealistic for their demographic

**their perceived 'happiness':** 'happiness' is not necessarily a negative to depict, but, the concepts were considered 'too happy'

Each of these reduce their ability to resonate with a broad target audience and raise **questions of eligibility**.

### Preferred / ideal recommendation:

*Consider:* A montage-style execution which moves through multiple households (within one execution) as this will enable broader connection, cut-through and stronger message take-out.

### Alternative recommendation:

One TVC, depicting one household 'type' could limit the ability of the communications to cut through. However, if the 'family' / 'couple' TVC is pursued:

*Consider:* If the teenage boy is in the kitchen, consider removing the homework reference / wearing headphones.

*Consider:* The clothing / 'happiness' needs to be dialled down.

### Alternative recommendation:

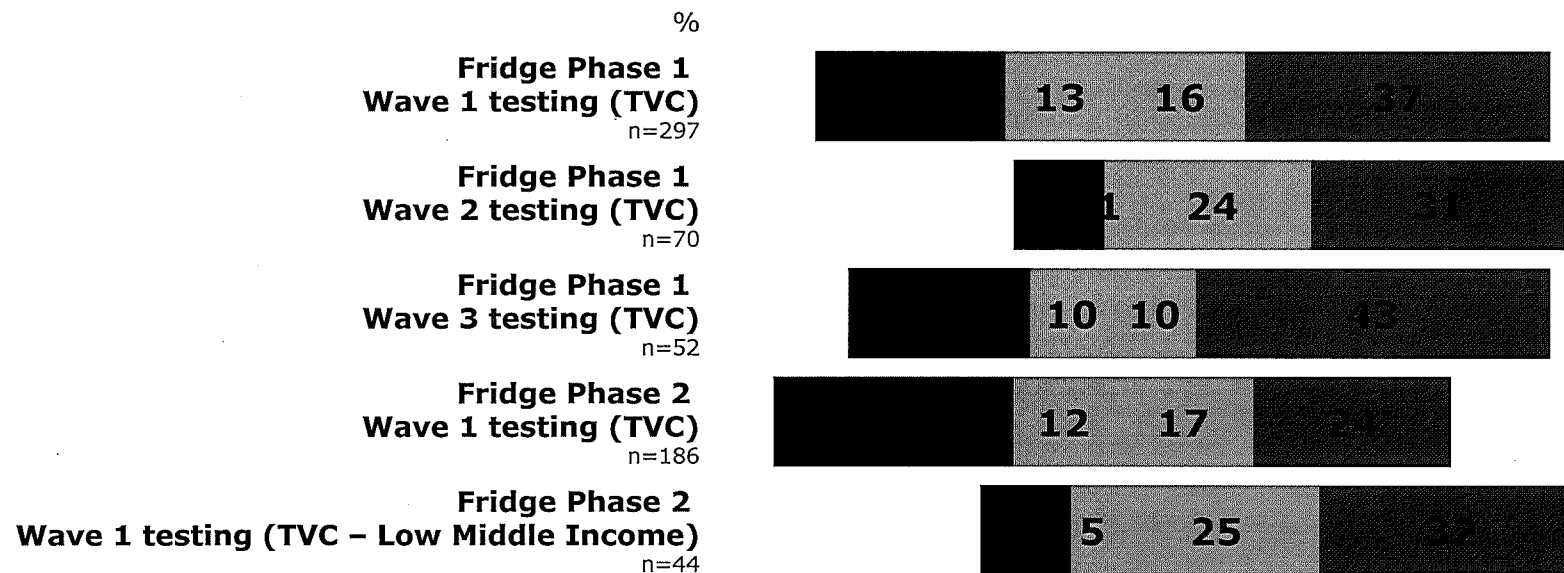
*Consider:* Removal of people from the concept (akin to Phase 1 Waves 1 and 2 testing of the "Fridge" concept where people were not present)?



The effect of this on 'eligibility' is evident in analysis of the **rating sheet** task ...where there is greater polarity evident in Phase 2 relative to Phase 1 Wave 3.

**Proportion who agree with:** Is not aimed at people like me

**Proportion who agree with:** Is aimed at people like me



SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it.

## creative elements...

3

Visual cues on the '**calendar**' (TVC and press) will be interpreted very literally ...they should be selected carefully as they have the potential to 'include' and 'exclude' target audiences

All groups referenced the calendar depicted in the TV and press concepts. Consistent focal points of discussion:

**luxury items:** were considered too prominent – this included 'a day for shopping', 'concert tickets', 'multiple birthday parties', 'planning holidays/trips'

**'everyday expenses':** became somewhat lost because of the perceived dominance of 'luxury' items on the calendar

**helping with 'everyday expenses':** also became lost for many (with the 'paid' / 'circling' references) because it was considered 'adding' to the clutter, rather than providing focus

**magnets and pictures:** were considered 'too happy' ...particularly the 'smiley face' – and currently 'clutter'.

**(minor) names/spelling:** alternative names polarise  
Each of these **reduce the ability of the campaign to deliver the desired messaging.**

### Recommendation:

For press, the execution without the uncluttered version is generally preferred and should facilitate stronger message delivery.

### Recommendation:

*Consider:* The balance of 'bills' to 'other' references on the calendar needs to be with focussed on bills.

*Consider:* Referencing someone's birthday is fine ...but, remove references to parties. Remove the number of specific references to parties / holidays / tickets.

*Consider:* Utilising magnets etc used in Phase 1.

## message elements...

# 4

The current message content will drive **inquisitiveness**

Most people participating in the research raised several unanswered questions post exposure to the communications.

Rather than this being considered a 'negative', however, it was generally accepted as information that would not be 'one size fits all' ...which, in turn, drove acceptance of the need to personally source additional information and content.

Having 'unanswered questions' is considered acceptable – as long as there are clear paths to source additional information ...and, the desired content is accessible.

### Recommendation:

The **website**, and content within, is of critical importance.

Most seem to prefer, and expect, a dedicated website / page regarding HAP.

At a minimum, the HAP branding should be explicit on the website / page. This 'visually anchors' to the individual that they have landed on the 'right page', and will also provide cumulative benefits with the 'package' message (as the website content will include references to Phase 1 and Phase 2 elements).

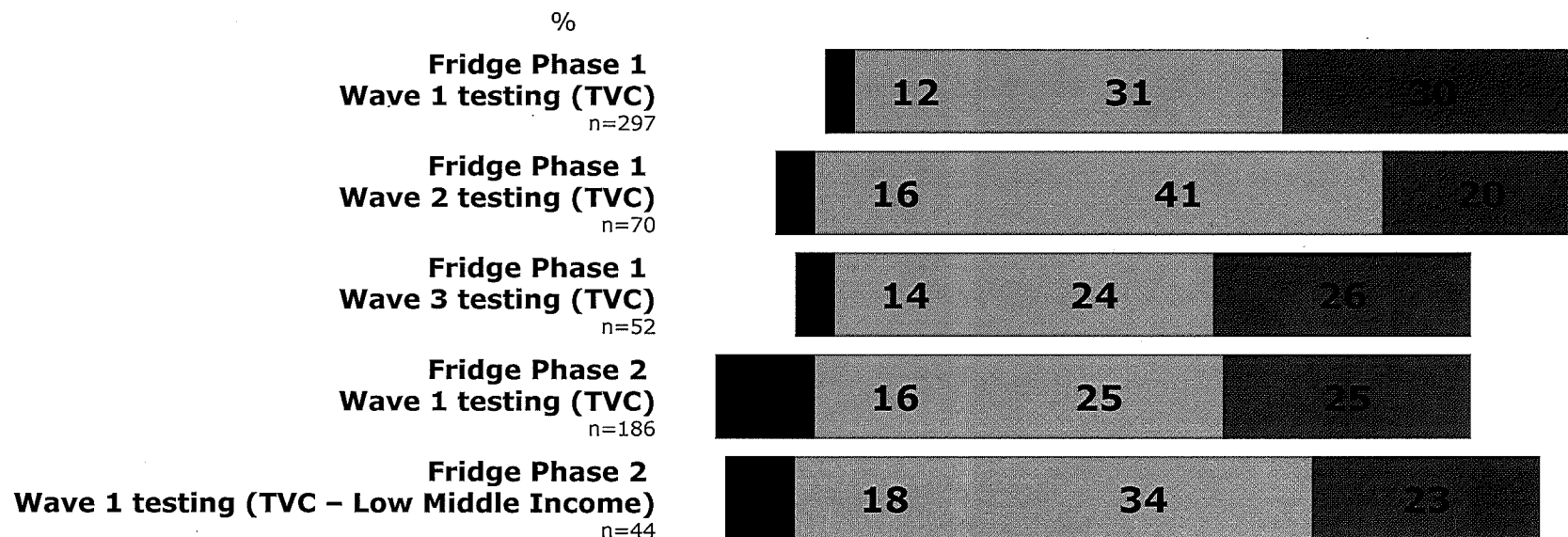
Some consider a page with links to other websites (DHS / ATO) acceptable ...however, many consider this highly unacceptable and want all content in one central place to 'validate' their perceived effort of the search.

*Further detail on key questions / areas of likely information searching are noted later in this document.*

Based on the rating sheet analysis ...  
 compared to Phase 1, a similar proportion (around half) feel **confident** they understand the personal impact of HAP after being exposed to the TVC communications.

**Proportion who agree with:** I do not feel confident I understand, and the personal impact

**Proportion who agree with:** I feel confident I understand, and the personal impact of HAP

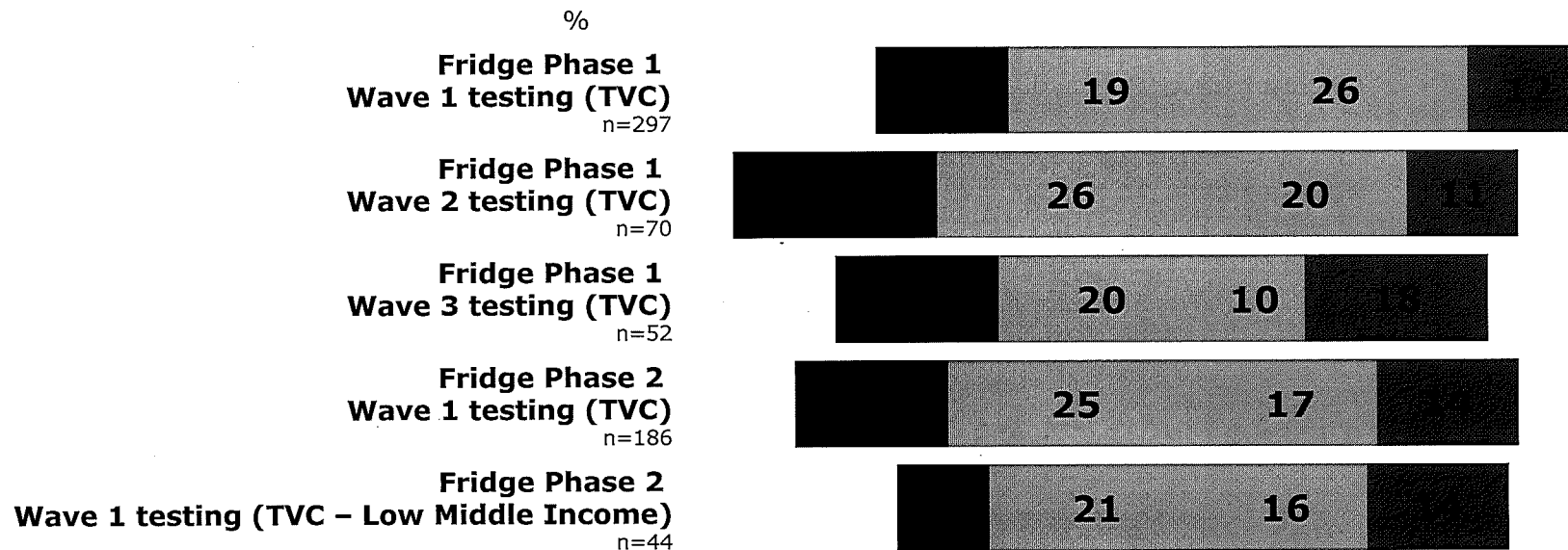


SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it.

However ...there remains a indicatively high proportion  
with **unanswered questions** ...

**Proportion who agree with:** It left me with lots  
of questions

**Proportion who agree with:** Gave me all the  
information I needed

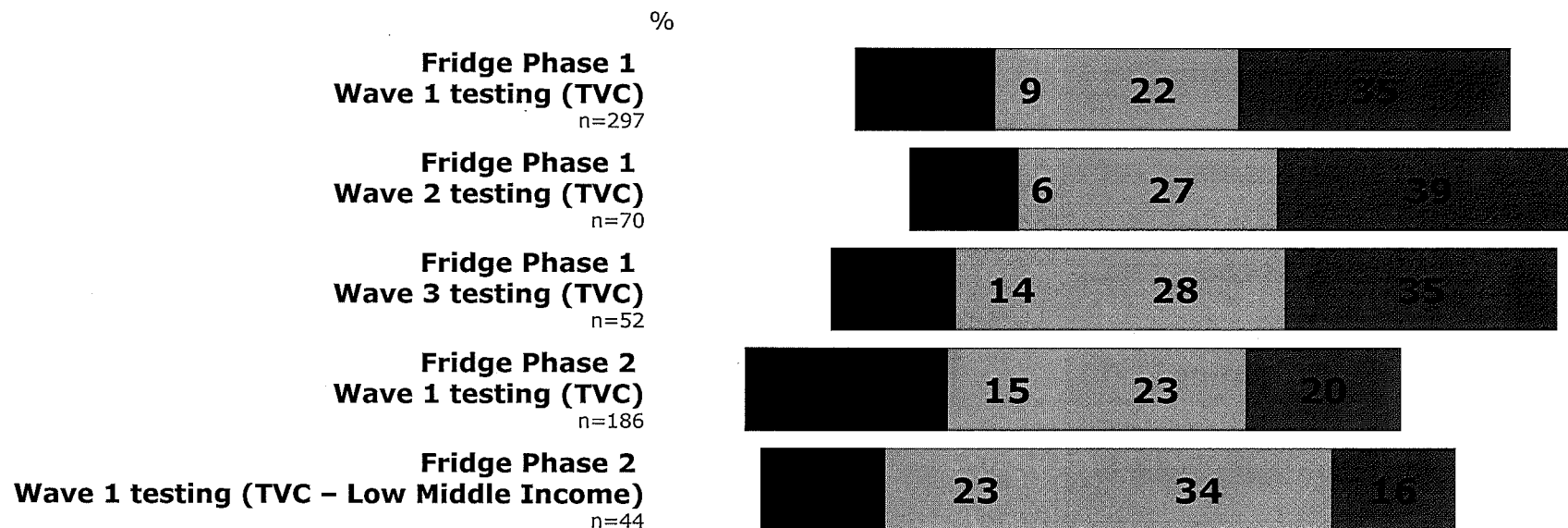


SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it.

And, the campaign in its Wave 1 form does not yet appear sufficiently motivating to seek additional content ...

**Proportion who agree with:** I would not go to the website / call to get more information

**Proportion who agree with:** I would go to the website / call to get more information



SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it.

## *message elements...*

5

Current message appears to accurately deliver the likely '**scale**' / personal implications of Phase 2

Broadly, most participants in the research indicated a realistic expectation of the likely scale of the personal financial benefit that would be realised from Phase 2.

While there were some perceptions of 'taking with one hand via increased utility prices, giving back with the other' ...and, some questions raised as to whether the tax changes would adequately compensate for this, expectations certainly did not appear unrealistically elevated.

It is noted that initial concerns raised in relation to Phase 1 (for example, the target audience considering that HAP would pay for 'all' their bills / 'most' of their bills) were not present.



## message elements...

6

Cumulative benefits of Phase 1 and Phase 2 as a '**package**' are not currently being realised

Most people included in the research did not make a clear, direct link between Phase 1 and Phase 2 as a result of being exposed to Phase 2 communications ...either in terms of communications, or the elements of HAP itself.

Creatively – some (but, probably less than one third) recognise the HAP branding as the element that transitioned and linked the campaigns.

Others (Phase 1 recipients) had received their initial payment and were aware of the package in this regard ...but, did not make the link that Phase 2 was linked to this initial payment.

Not establishing a strong link weakens the potential cumulative benefit the 'package' message can deliver.

### Recommendation:

Establishing a stronger link to the 'package' message must be addressed and delivered upon in order to realise any cumulative benefits and drive the 'package' message.

*Consider:* The prominence / size of the branding in the press could be elevated ...and, some suggest that it is also included as a 'fridge magnet'. As referenced previously, this branding should ideally also be included on the website / web landing page.

*Consider:* Establishing a more explicit content-based link between Phase 1 and Phase 2 – the fridge creative element as the implicit visual link does not appear to be sufficient. Ideally, this would be in voice over (TVC and radio) and text (press and online).



# This is supported in the rating sheet task ...

## Financial assistance

- for households
- for families
- for elderly
- for low income earners / receiving Govt. payment
- for many Australians

## Package

- Tax cuts
- Tax free threshold tripling
- For those with incomes up to \$80,000
- Lump sum / one-off payment
- Additional payment
- New regular payments
- Household package / package
- 'Household Assistance Package / HAP'

## Timing

- 1 July 2012

Benefitting those who need it most  
To help with the cost of living  
More money in your pocket

## Phase 2 Wave 1

TVC Press Radio

%	%	%
10	7	7
10	1	2
0	0	0
5	3	5
5	0	0
21	35	30
30	15	22
33	15	30
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	2
5	3	5
8	6	9
10	5	9
17	24	12
6	5	4

**Message**  
takeout is  
centralised on  
messages with  
'tax cuts' ...which  
does not deliver  
linkage to a  
broader  
'package', and  
may impede  
realisation of  
cumulative  
benefits between  
Phase 1 and  
Phase 2.

Q2. What are all the things you remember being spoken about in this ad ...what was it trying to tell you / what did you take out of it? Please write in as much detail as you can. BASE: n=186



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## message elements...

7

There are some minor points of confusion over **eligibility**

There were two key drivers of questions relating to eligibility:

**individual v. household:** There was some confusion in most of the qualitative groups regarding whether the \$80,000 limit related to 'household' or 'individual' income.

The focus of the TVC on 'household' (and depiction of families / couples rather than individuals) does impact this ...as does the reference of the word 'household' in HAP.

**some people:** In addition, references to the terms "some people may eligible for other assistance" drives this further – and this was true among those eligible ...as well as those who would be considered ineligible for Phase 2.

### Recommendation:

*Consider:* The distinction of 'personal' / 'individual' income needs to be made clear across all communication mediums ...without this, other references to 'household' (visual, branding, content) confuse this.

*Consider:* Is the reference to 'some people may be eligible for other assistance' politically necessary, internally important? If not, then consider removing these references – or finding a way to introduce them which has some tangibility - as they are unlikely to deliver incremental benefit in their current expression.

## message elements...

8

The **'tripling the tax free threshold'** is considered very strong, and is likely to have high cut-through

In most groups, discussions around the message of 'tripling the tax free threshold' were discussed very positively.

This was considered a major change to the tax system – both in terms of the length of time since the threshold was last changed ...and the extent / perceived scale of the change.

While there is certainly some confusion around this (for example – tripling 'from' 'to?'), this message has tangibility and resonates strongly with all (including non-eligible) as something that has the potential to benefit the majority of Australians ...both now, and into the future.

### Recommendation:

On the website, clarification will need to remain as to the 'from' 'to' amounts of the tax free threshold.

*Consider:* As this message is very strong in terms of tangibility and resonance, this message should be maximised where possible. It is already prominent within voice over and content, however, if additional ways to maximise this could be identified, they should be considered. This could include:

- specific \$ value reference(/s) in the press copy
- integrating reference 'to \$18,200' into the voice over (TVC and radio)

*message elements...*

9

Specific **press** feedback (taglines and content)**Key points relating to press copy:**

Clarification is required to complement the word 'further initiatives'. As referenced previously, the link between Phase 1 and Phase 2 are not currently strong and this terminology therefore represents confusion, and weakens the potential for cumulative impact of the package.

Clarification should be provided on the 'tripling the tax free threshold'. It is an important message, and greater clarification ('from' / 'to') will strengthen it.

The 'tax free threshold' and 'tax cuts' references should be ideally separated into separate paragraphs in the print copy to maximise the complementary benefit that each of these messages will bring to this phase of the communications.

Specific terminology which is polarising:

"Assistance" – relates more to 'payments' rather than tax

"Help" – associated with welfare recipients

"Taking worry out" – cliché / 'bank ad'

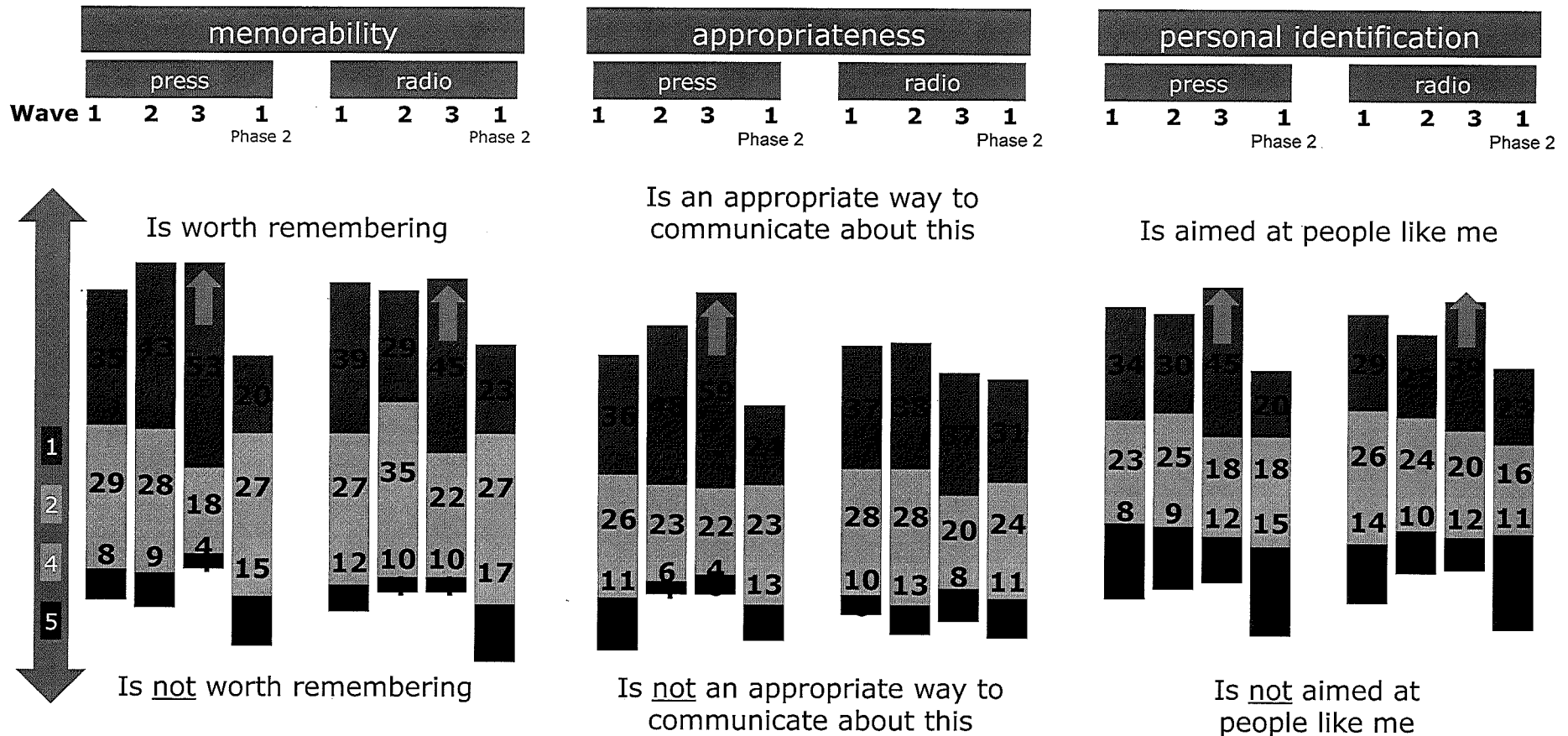
**Recommendation for review / testing:****Tax cuts to benefit millions of Australians**

The Australian Government is introducing further initiatives to help you with your (everyday expenses / cost of living). The initiatives began in May 2012 and involved providing extra additional, and ongoing, financial assistance to those receiving government payments.

This next stage of initiatives commences 1 July 2012 when the **tax free threshold will triple from** \$6,000 to \$18,200, benefiting millions of Australian taxpayers.

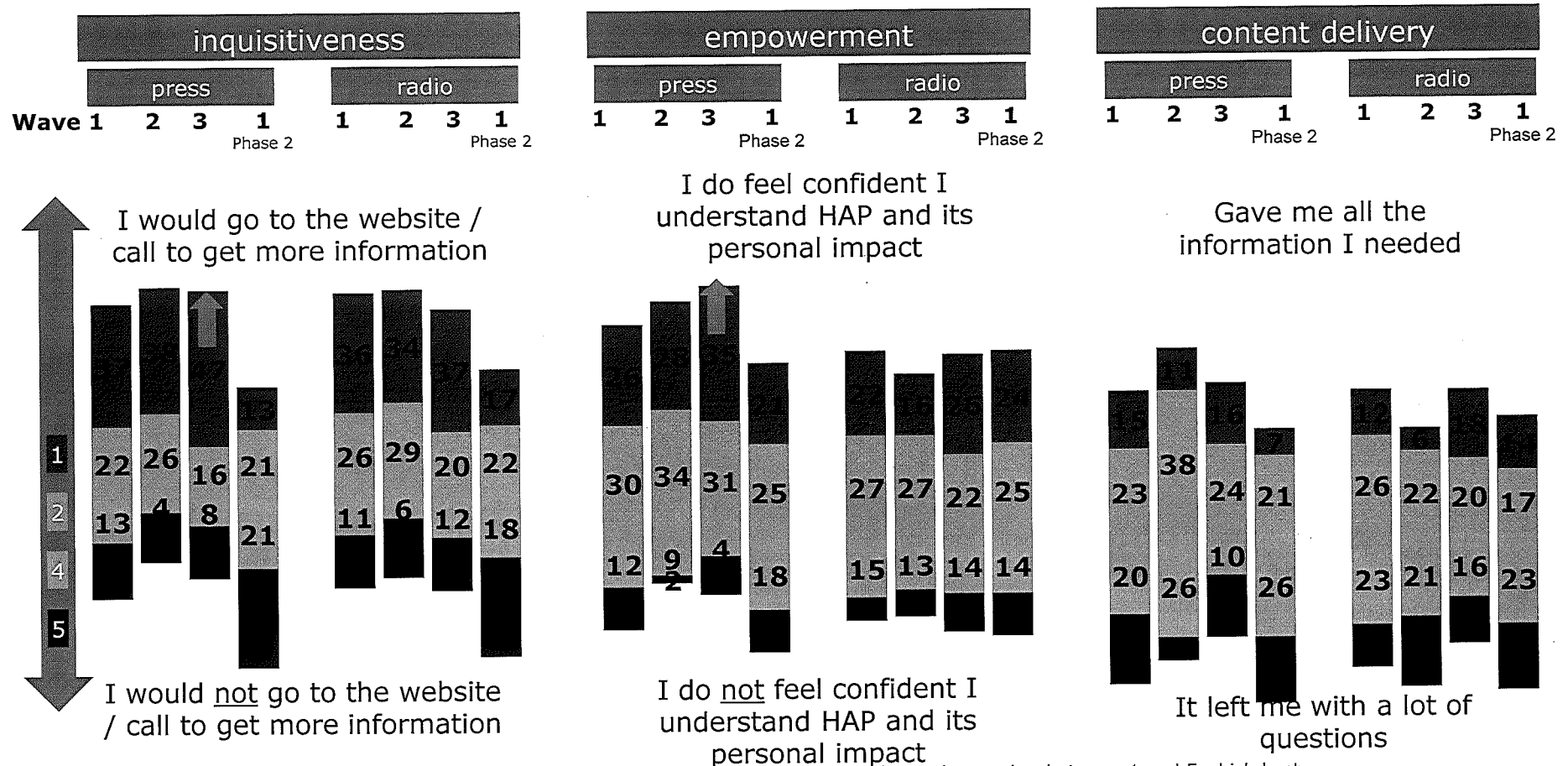
What's more, if your annual personal taxable income is up to \$80,000, you'll receive **tax cuts** that will put more money back into your pocket.

The rating sheet tasks support that there has been little cumulative benefit obtained between Phase 1 and Phase 2 press / radio ...this needs to be addressed via **greater content linkage**.



SOURCE: (Q3) For each word or phrase, please indicate the number between 1 and 5 which best describes what you thought of it. BASE: Wave 1 n=297, Wave 2 n=70, Wave 3 n=52

The rating sheet tasks support that there has been little cumulative benefit obtained between Phase 1 and Phase 2 press / radio ...this needs to be addressed via **greater content linkage**.



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## message elements...

10

Links of HAP to **carbon pricing** are recognised by some, but not all ...if carbon is not explicitly referenced in the campaign, it must be referenced through other mediums

Almost all participants link the purpose of the package to '**increased cost of living**'. A smaller number, (generally 2 per group) spontaneously linked the campaign / HAP with carbon tax. However, when this discussion ensues (ie. when prompted), the majority agree with the link to carbon. More broadly, however, most of these people describe carbon pricing as 'one of the contributors' to increased cost of living – and, therefore the package (among these people) is positively received as a 'broader' commitment to assisting with increased cost of living.

When the carbon link was made, it is noted that some people do respond negatively ...while others (who appeared to have greater acceptance of carbon tax in general) accepted 'any compensation' as 'compensation worthwhile having' – and, having 'broader' benefits (referenced above).

As referenced in Phase 1, the risk of the link to carbon pricing being (negatively) drawn by the media, does have the potential to negatively impact receptiveness to HAP and the campaign as, for some, it indicates an intentional omission of 'the obvious'.

However, it is worthwhile noting that there were very few participants across the groups who had noted any of the negative publicity occurring in the media recently relating to the campaign and its link with carbon.

### Recommendation (as per Phase 1):

*Consideration:* Referencing carbon pricing can be addressed through other communication mechanisms and does not necessarily need to be a part of this campaign.

We do, however, strongly recommend that the link is referenced – even if externally to the mass media campaign.

This will help reduce the risk of backlash for what is considered (to some) 'intentionally avoiding the obvious'.

*Consideration:* Additionally, a reference to carbon must be visually prominent on the website and specific, explicit content delivered on the link to carbon pricing.

*Consideration:* Referring to 'everyday expenses' and/or 'cost of living' in all communications is essential as this grounds the purpose of HAP.

## message elements...

11

### Specific feedback on **banner ad**

Many considered the banner ad to have a positive contribution to the campaign.

In particular, it was liked because:

- It was considered simple and clear
- It did not focus on a particular target audience and was felt to be applicable to everybody
- The 'are you eligible' button was an appropriate and enticing 'call to action'

#### Recommendation:

*Consider:* Those clicking on the 'are you eligible' link from the banner ad will expect a 'calculator' / clear articulation of their eligibility, and the extent of their eligibility. It is essential that the website / content this is directed to is adequate (refer to previous discussion on website).