

THE AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE

**Saints or Communists?**  
**Non-government organisations in**  
**Australia**

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**[www.tai.org.au](http://www.tai.org.au)**

“When I feed the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.”

Dom Helder Camara,  
Archbishop of Recife, Brazil

# NGO's contribution to democracy

- ⌘ Deliberative forums
- ⌘ Represent marginalised groups
- ⌘ Policy evaluation
- ⌘ Channel for consultation
- ⌘ Enrich public debate
- ⌘ Keep governments accountable
- ⌘ Counterbalance corporate influence

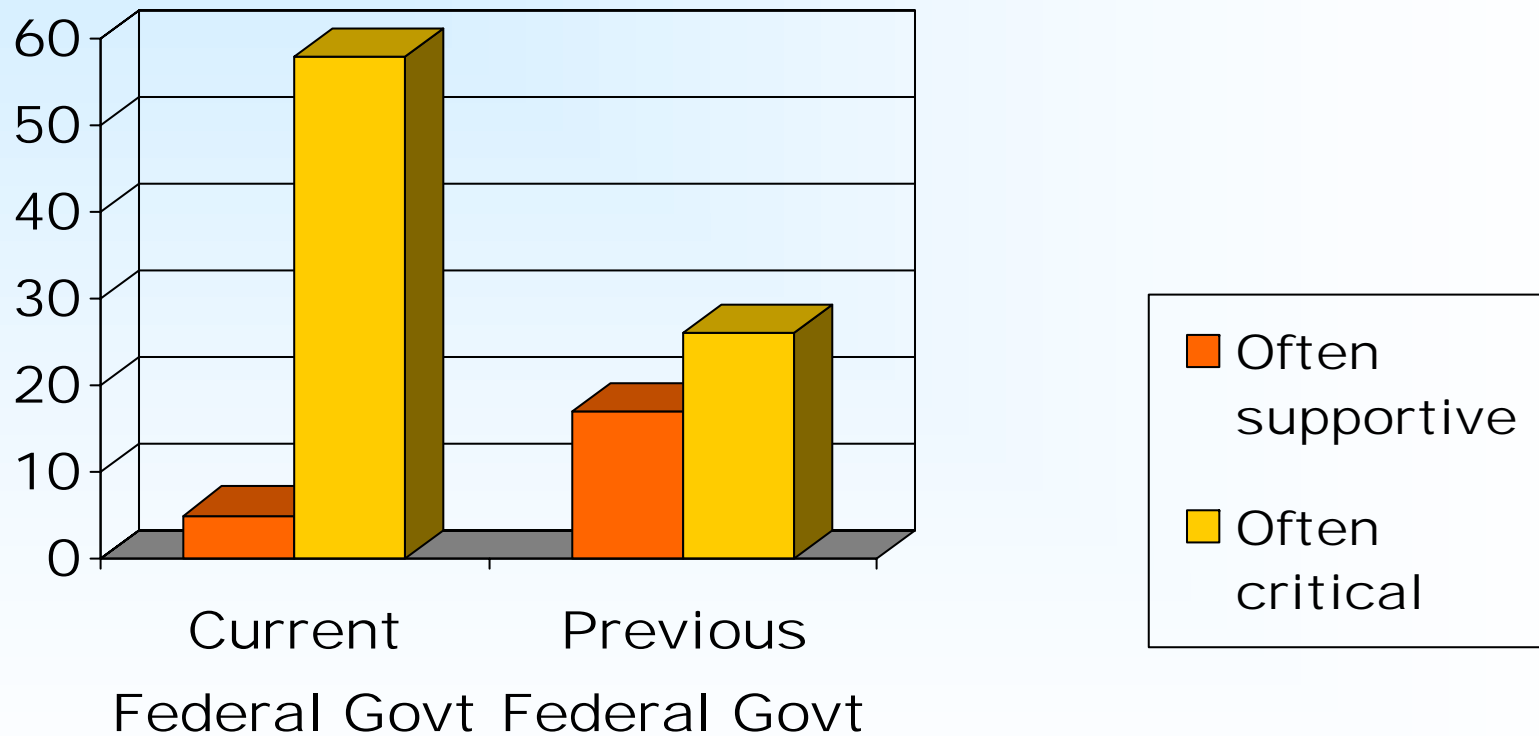
If “the Tax Office receives information [about a charity] which, upon further examination, confirms the advocacy role as dominant, it is likely that the status will be revoked” .

Australian Tax Office

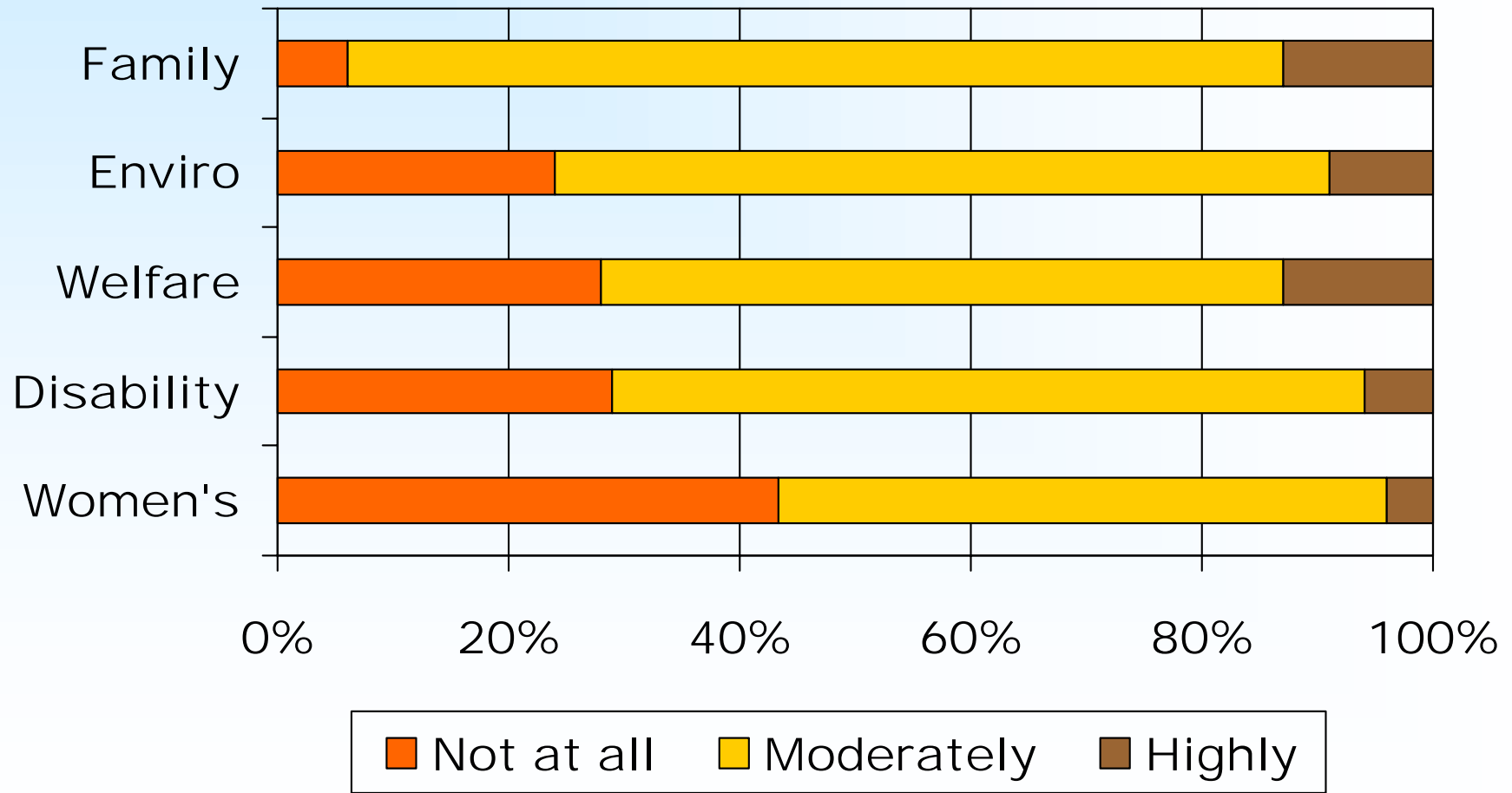
## Main field of survey respondents (%)

Social justice/welfare	27
Family/youth/older people	15
Environment	12
Human rights	11
Disability and mental health	11
Women's issues	9
Education and student welfare	6
Others	9

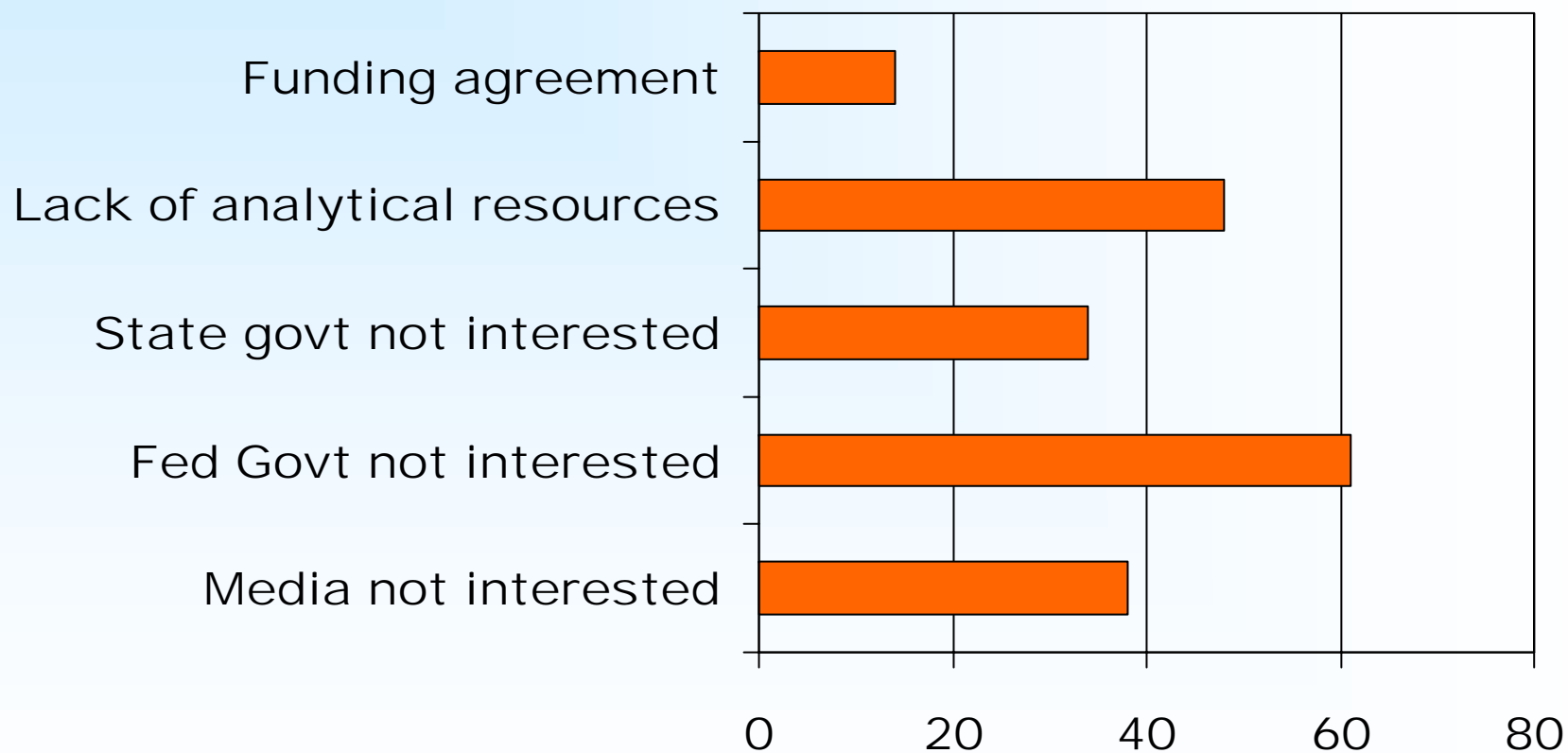
# Generally supportive or critical of government policy (%)



# Successful in having message heard by government?

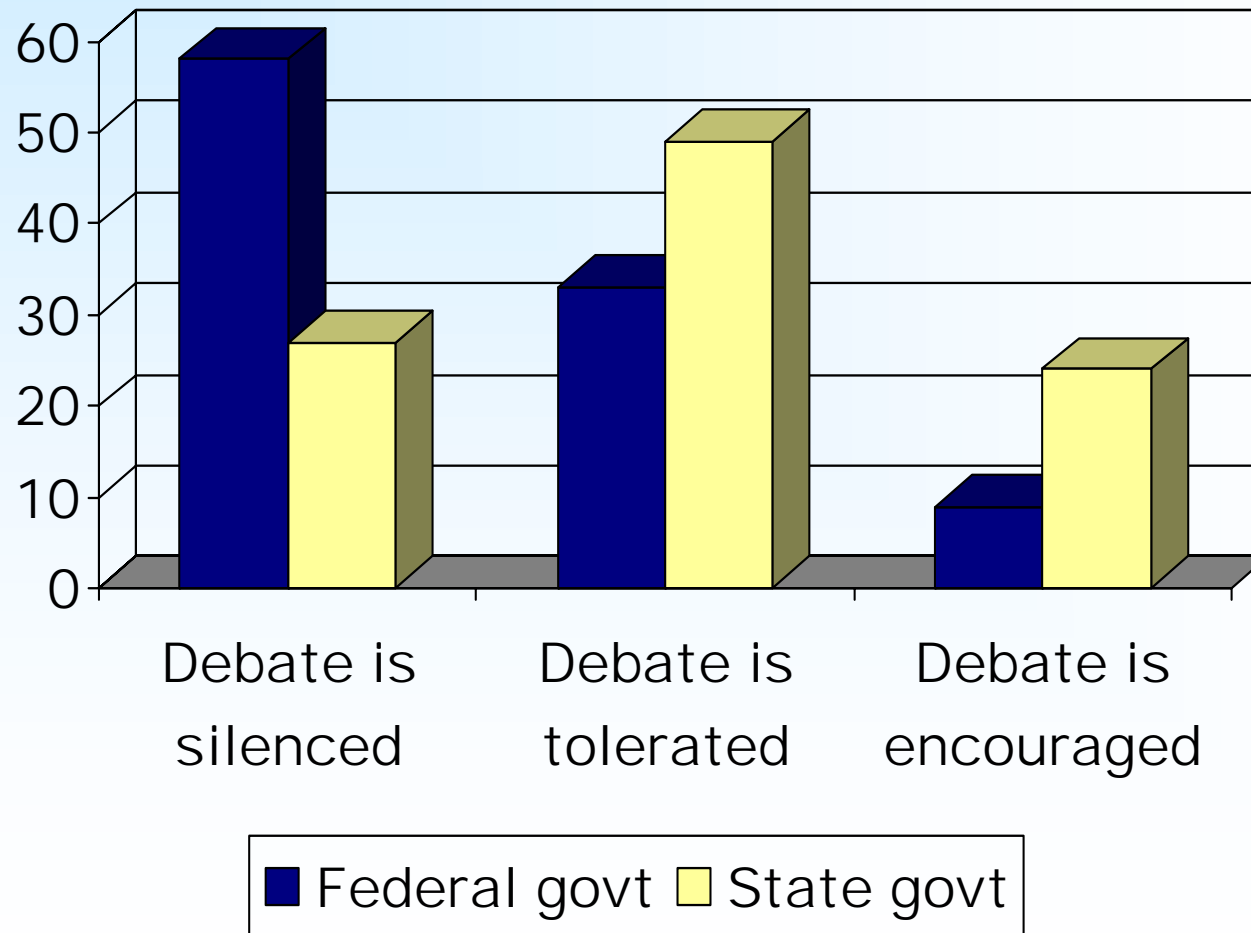


# Main barriers to being heard encountered 'often' or 'always' (%)

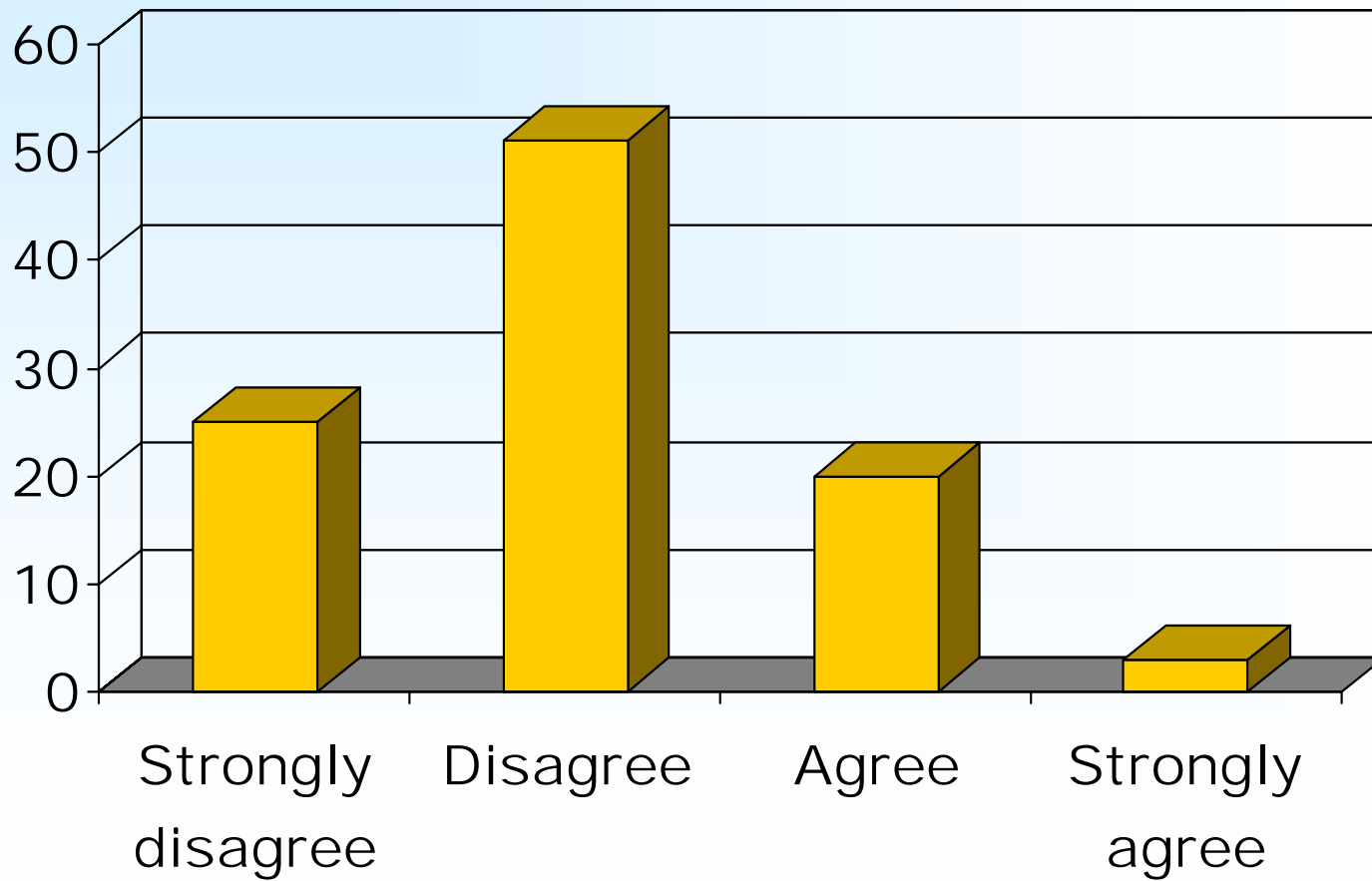




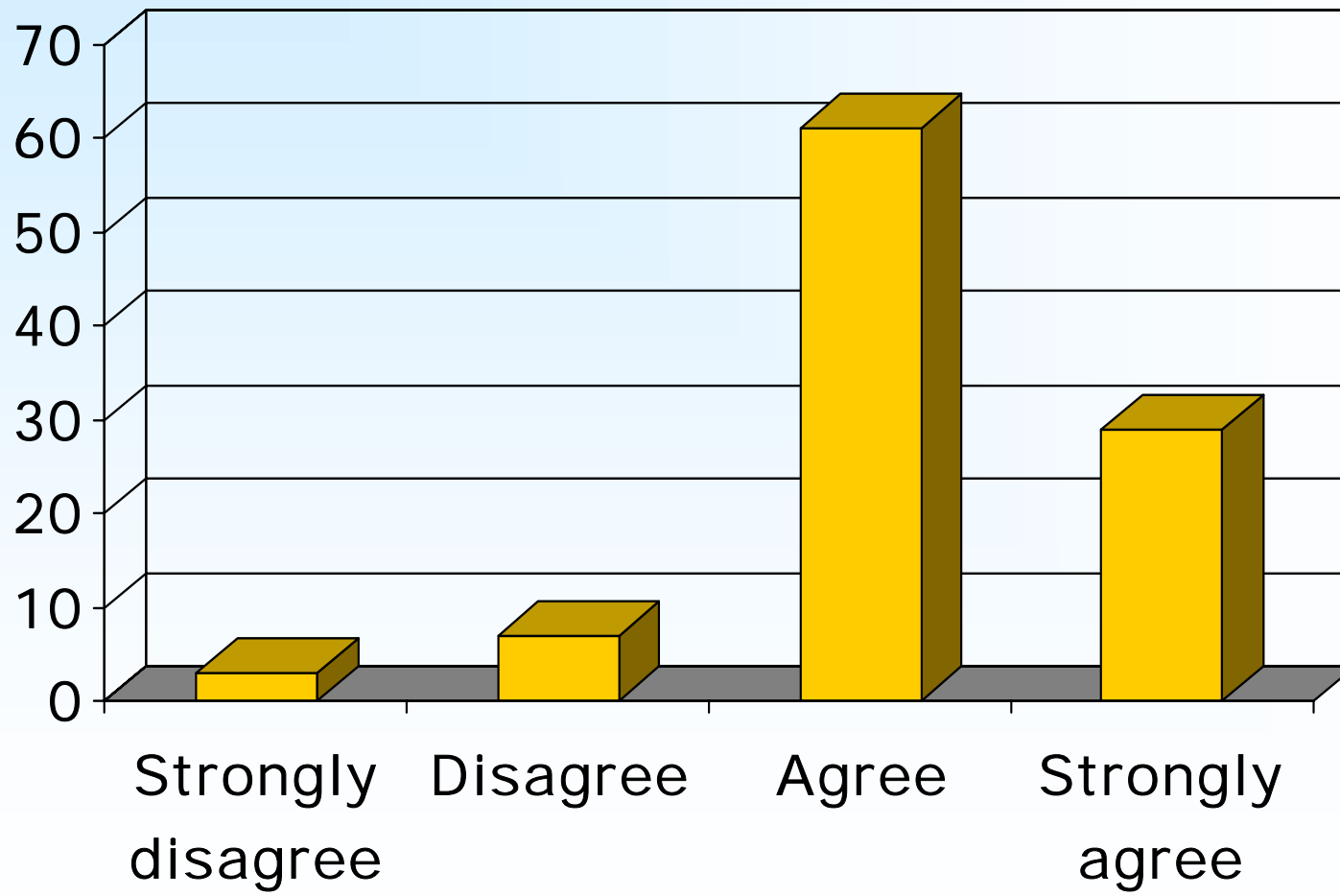
# Attitudes of governments to debate (%)



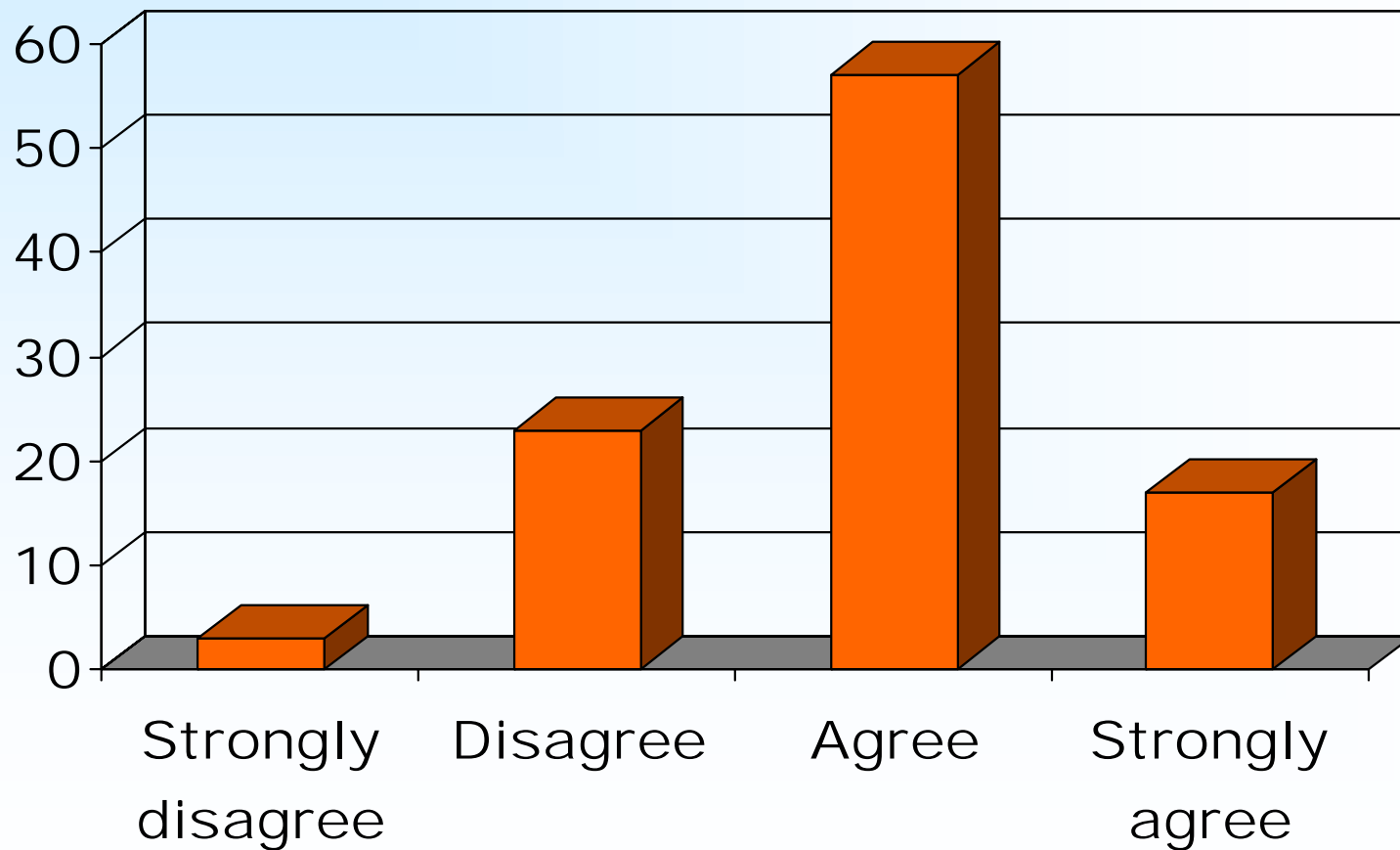
# Australian political culture encourages public debate (%)



# Dissenting organisations risk having govt funding cut (%)



NGOs are being pressured to amend statements to bring them into line with govt policy (%)



# Methods used by Federal Govt to silence NGOs

- ⌘ Defunding
- ⌘ Denigration
- ⌘ Bullying
- ⌘ Managing consultation processes
- ⌘ Diversions



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PS The Australia Institute receives no  
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