

Australians favour a republic and want another referendum

Findings from UMR Omnibus

May 2009

Methodology

- 1,000 online interviews
- Age: 18+
- Fieldwork:
 - 21-25 May 2009
 - 14-26 November 2008
 - 16-21 May 2008
- Data is weighted and matched with ABS census data to ensure a nationally representative sample
- Online panel members are primarily recruited offline and by invitation only ruling out self-selection issues associated with online methodologies
- Maximum margin of error at 95% confidence level: $\pm 3.1\%$

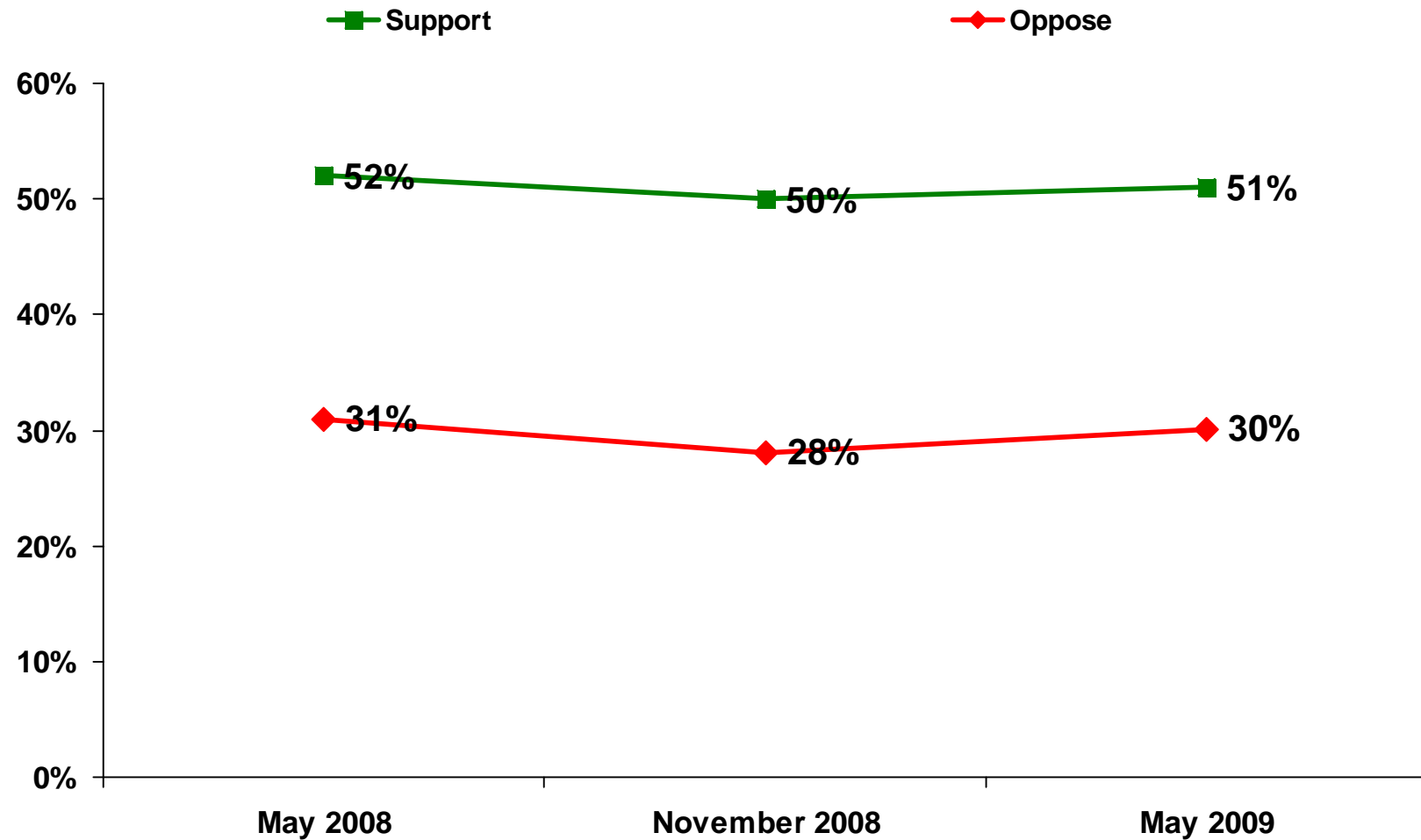
Key findings

- UMR's latest survey on the republican issue finds stable support levels for a republic over the past year
 - 51% of Australians support Australia becoming a republic whilst 30% oppose this
 - Support levels are highest amongst men, people in their "middle years" and Labor voters
- Support levels for another referendum on that issue during the next term of parliament are similar to support levels for a republic: 53% support a referendum and 34% oppose it
- However, the expectations of the outcome are not that clear: 37% think the referendum would succeed and Australia would become a republic, 39% think it would fail with the rest being unsure
- A huge majority of 81% would prefer a directly elected president over the parliament appointing a president
- When asked who they would like to see as Australia's first president Kevin Rudd, Quentin Bryce and John Howard are most often nominated

Level of support for a “republic”

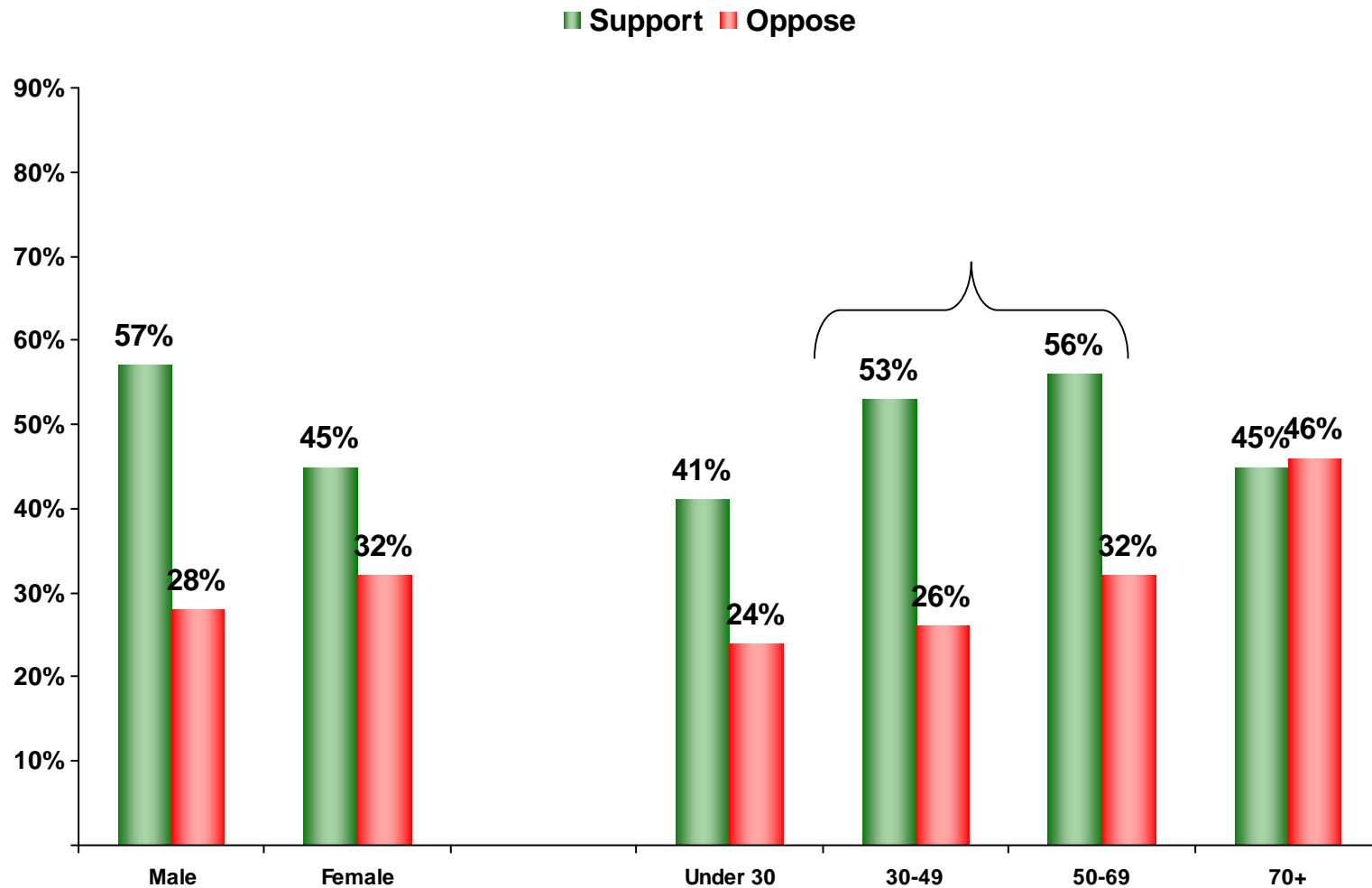
Stable levels of support for a republic over the last year

Do you support or oppose Australia becoming a republic?



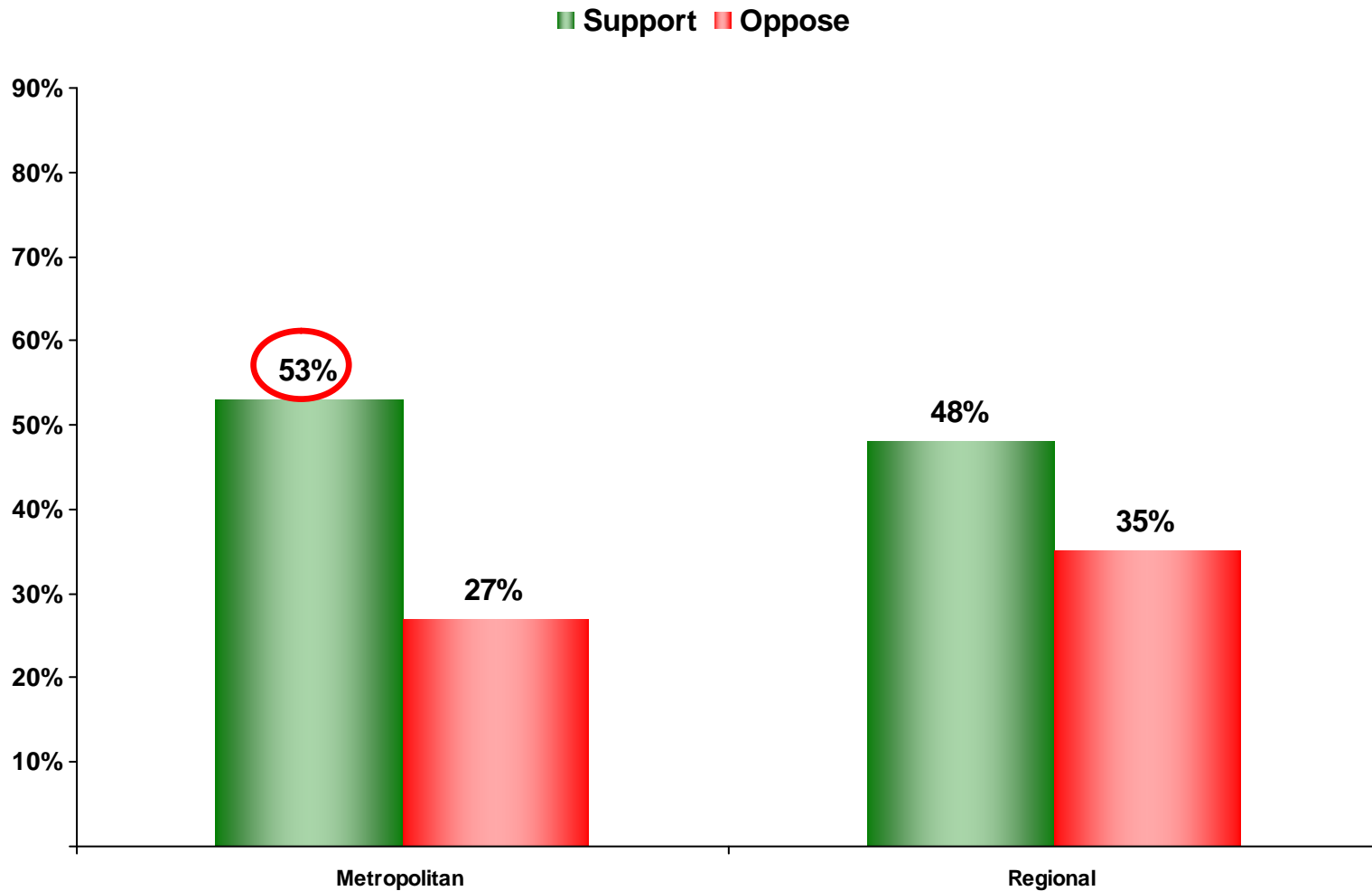
Men and people in their "middle years" are most in favour of a republic

Do you support or oppose Australia becoming a republic?



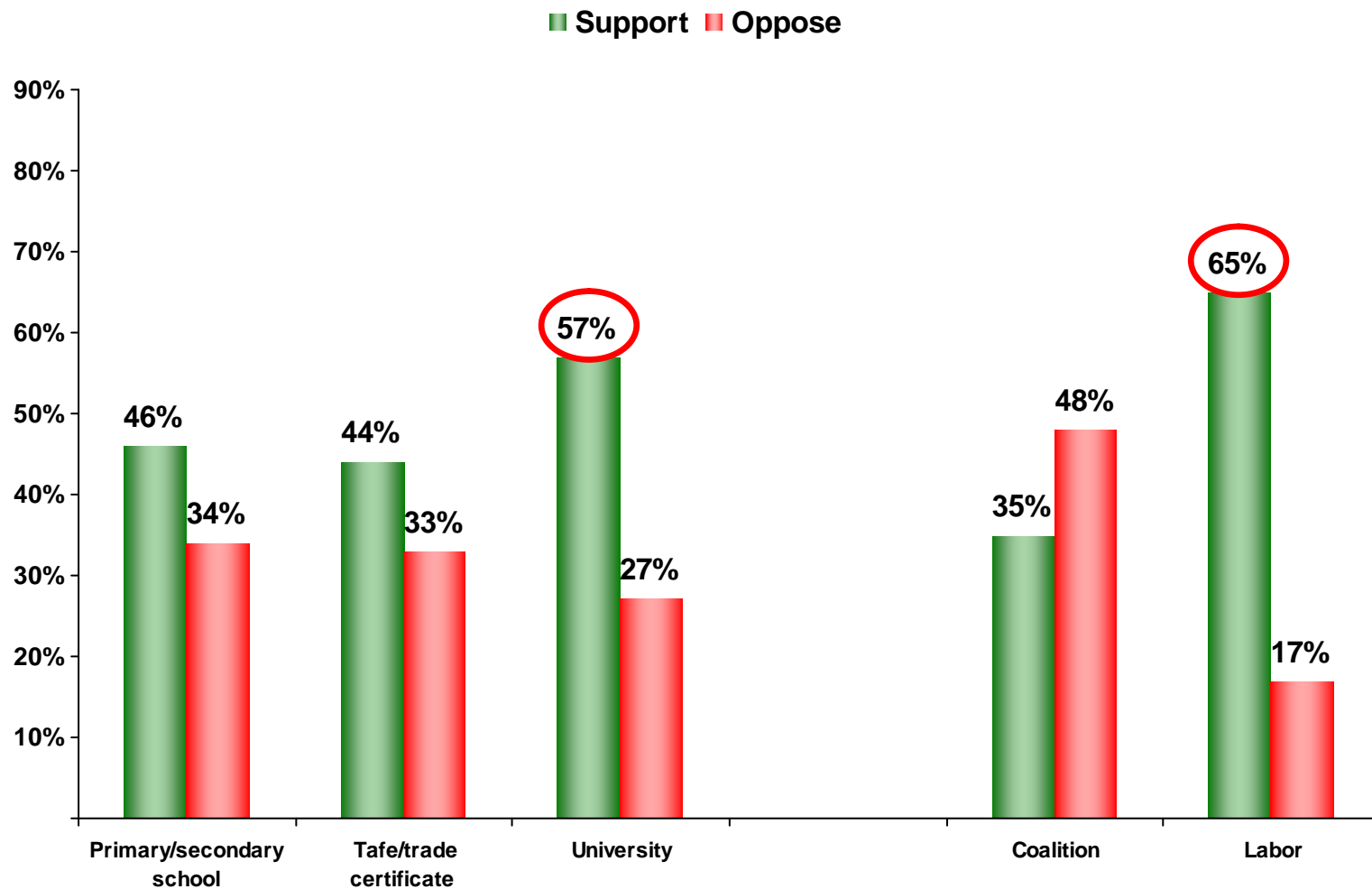
As are metropolitan areas

Do you support or oppose Australia becoming a republic?



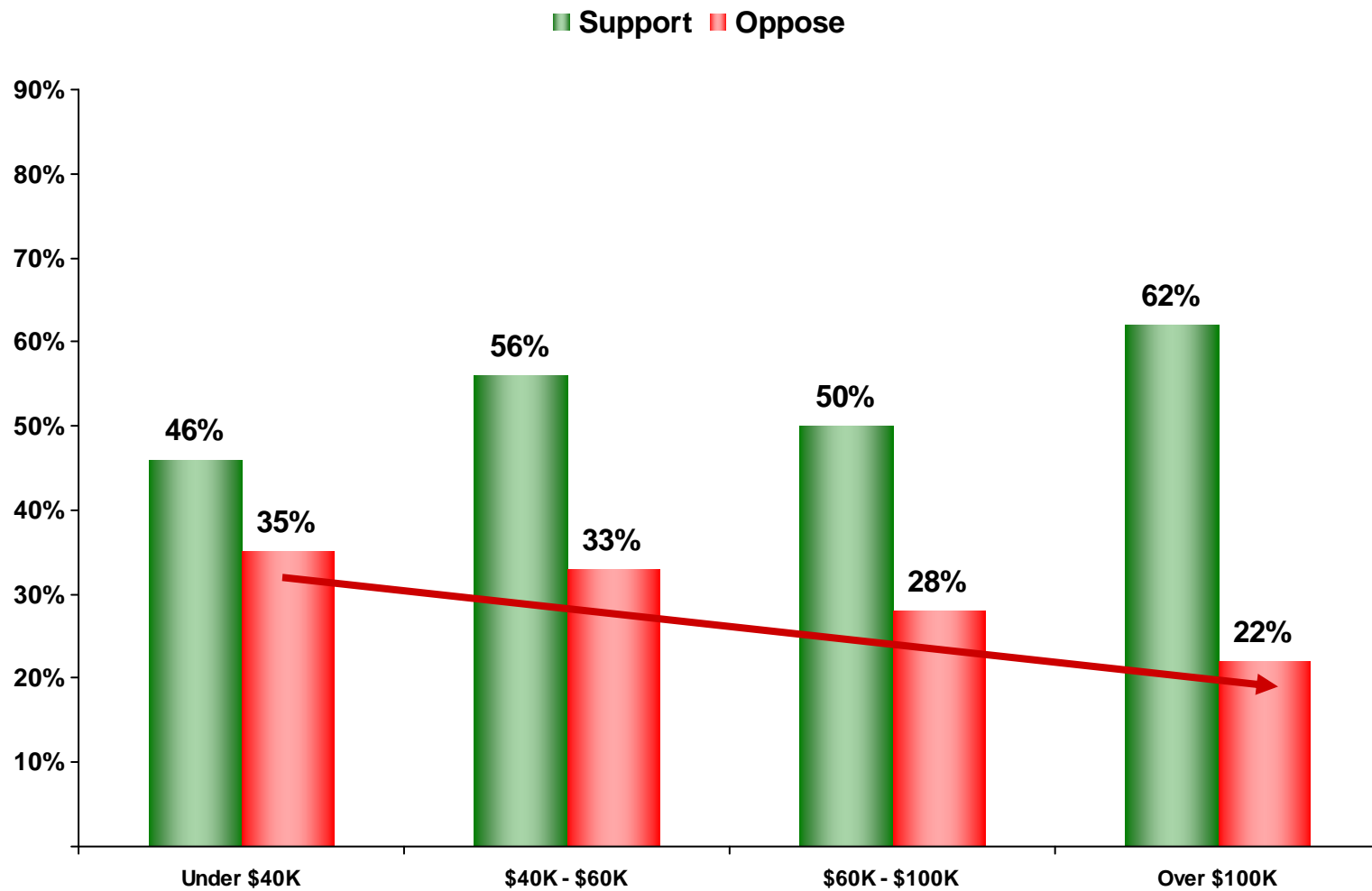
And the university educated and Labor voters

Do you support or oppose Australia becoming a republic?



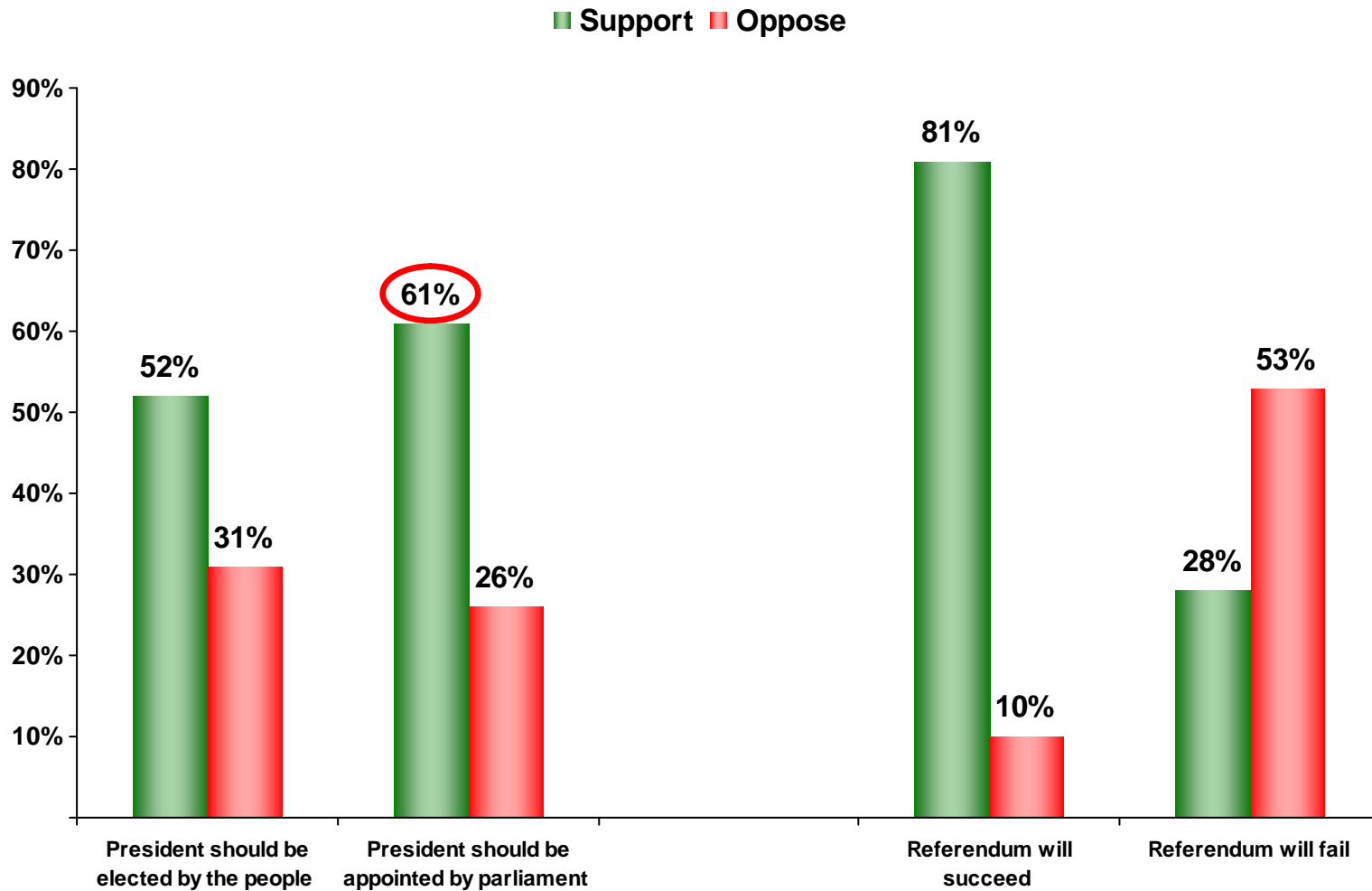
Plus higher income earners

Do you support or oppose Australia becoming a republic?



Support higher amongst those preferring a president appointed by parliament

Do you support or oppose Australia becoming a republic?



Reasons for support and opposition

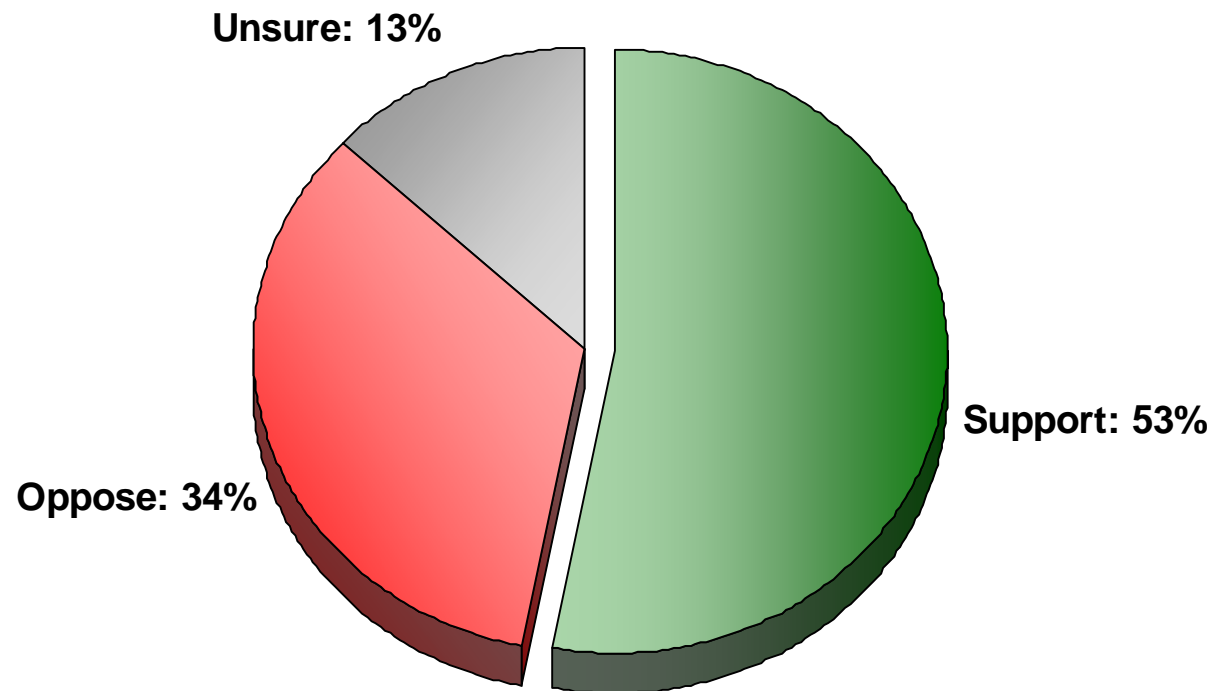
(November 2008 data)

- Overall, there are four broad themes why Australians support a republic: They think that
 - It's time to cut old ties to Great Britain
 - Monarchy is an outdated concept
 - There are little benefits to Australia from the current system
 - Australia is strong and can stand alone in the world
 - Indigenous Australians have been here before Britain
- Reasons for those opposing a republic are more diverse:
 - The current system is working, why should it be changed
 - The change would be too expensive, and there are other things that should be fixed first
 - The current system of Parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy is the better system
 - Unwanted consequences that a republic might have, mainly due to less control
 - The ties with Great Britain and the Commonwealth carry advantages for Australia that it would lose
 - Heritage and tradition

Do we want another referendum in
the next term of parliament?

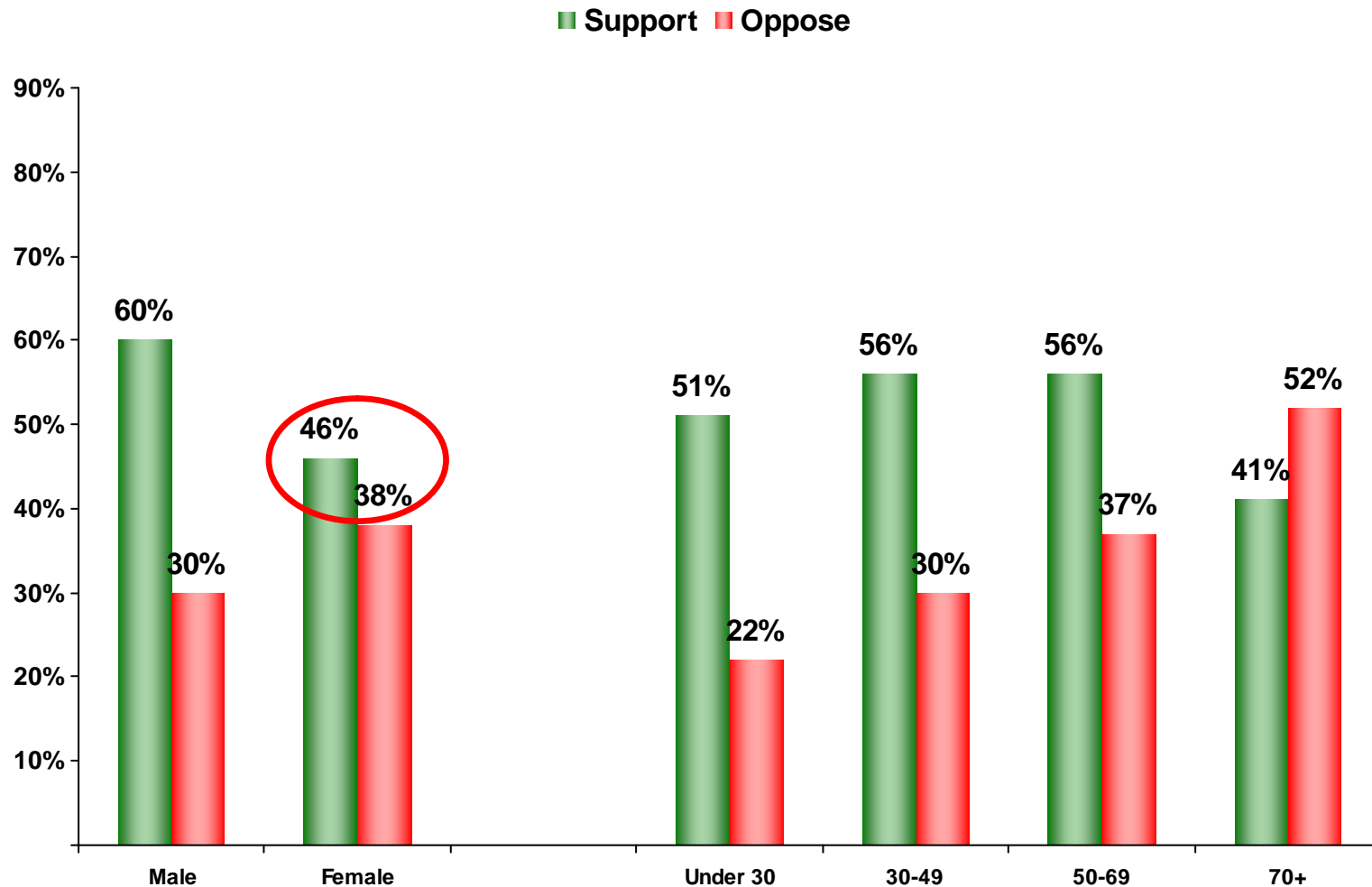
Yes, and it is slightly higher than support for the republic itself

Do you support or oppose the Federal Government holding another referendum on Australia becoming a republic during the next parliamentary term, which will likely run from 2010-2013?



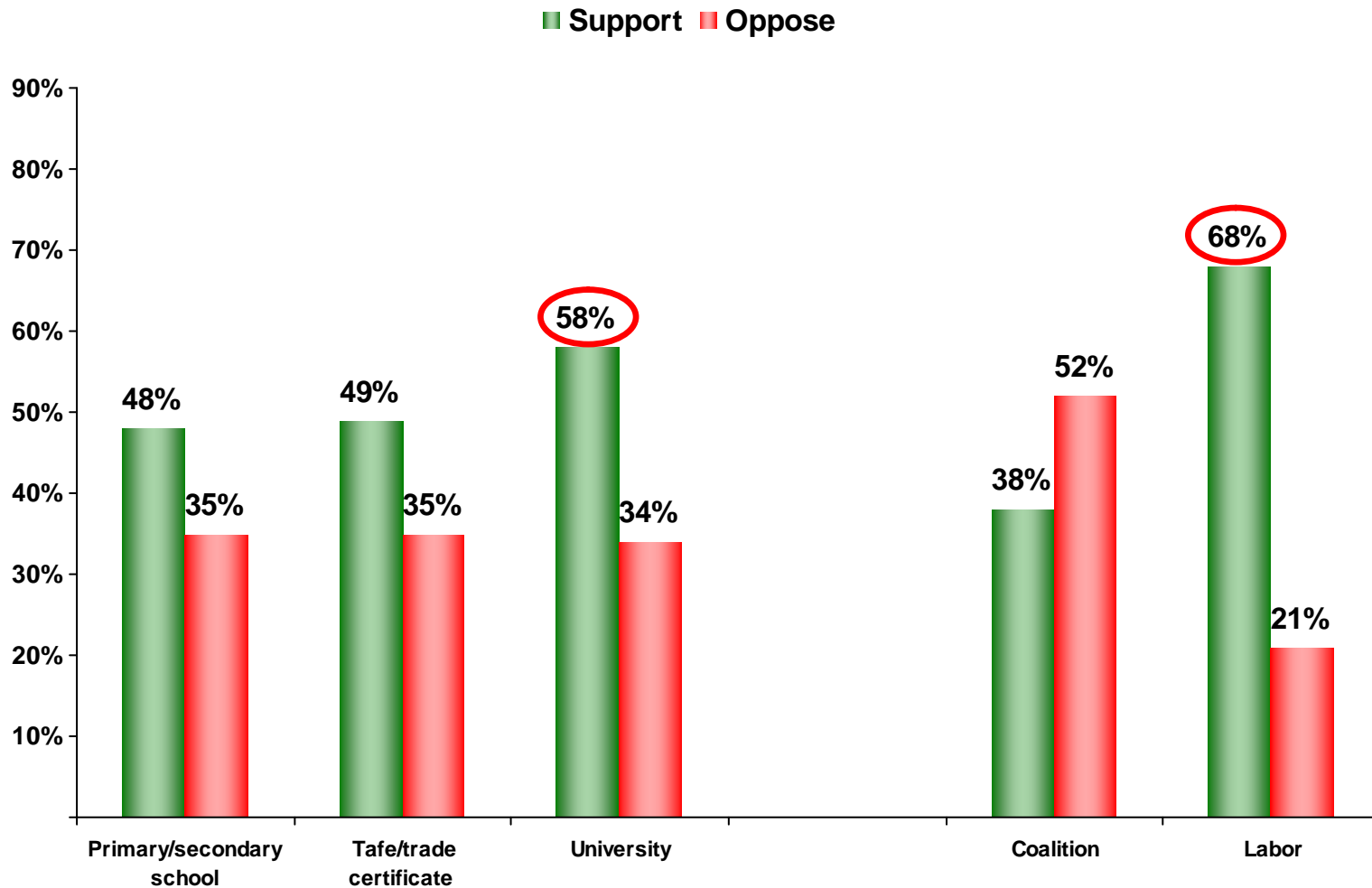
Women are lukewarm only

Do you support or oppose the Federal Government holding another referendum on Australia becoming a republic during the next parliamentary term, which will likely run from 2010-2013?



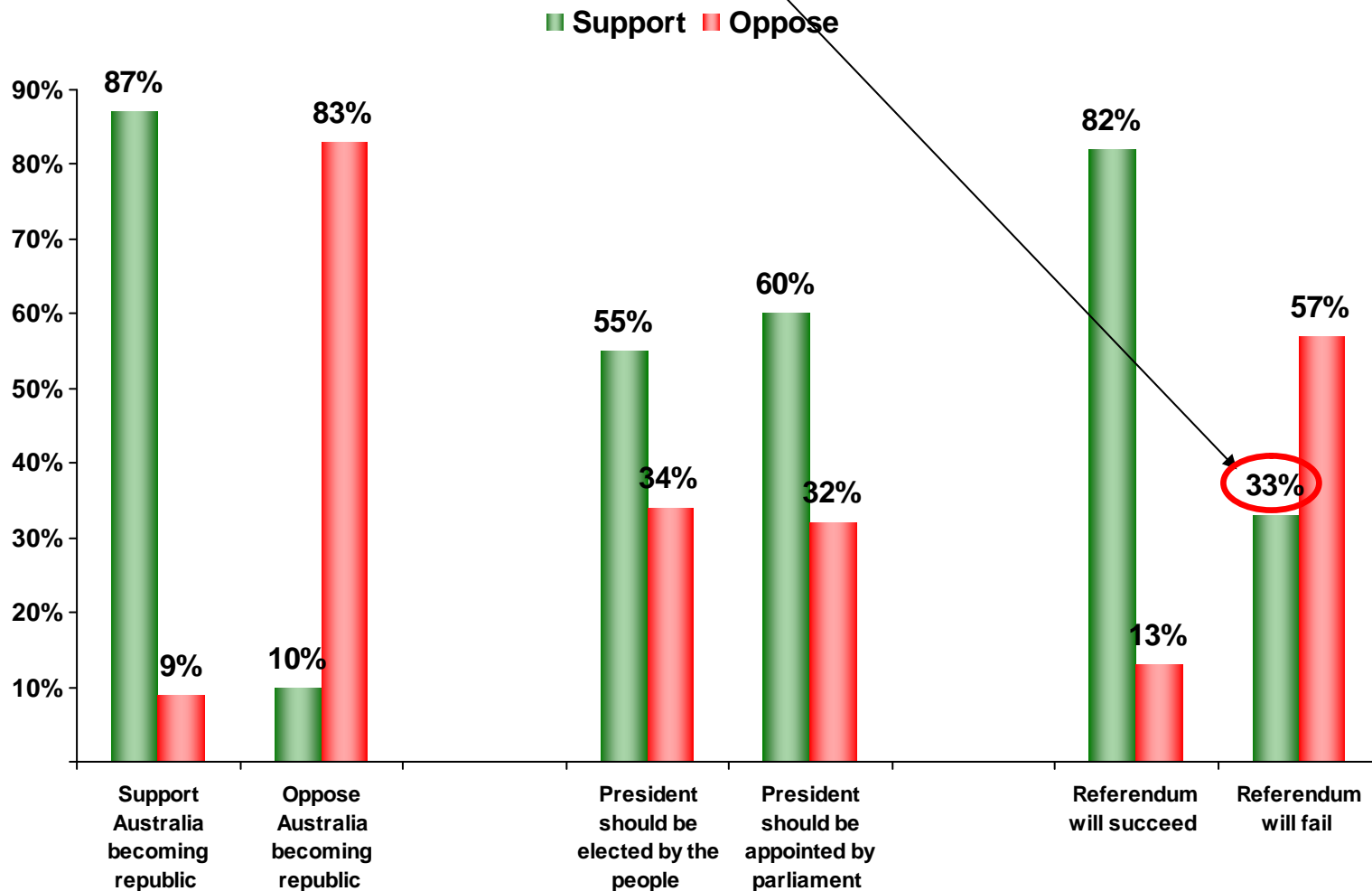
Mainly university educated and Labor voters

Do you support or oppose the Federal Government holding another referendum on Australia becoming a republic during the next parliamentary term, which will likely run from 2010-2013?



Some want it but believe it will fail, about 13% of population

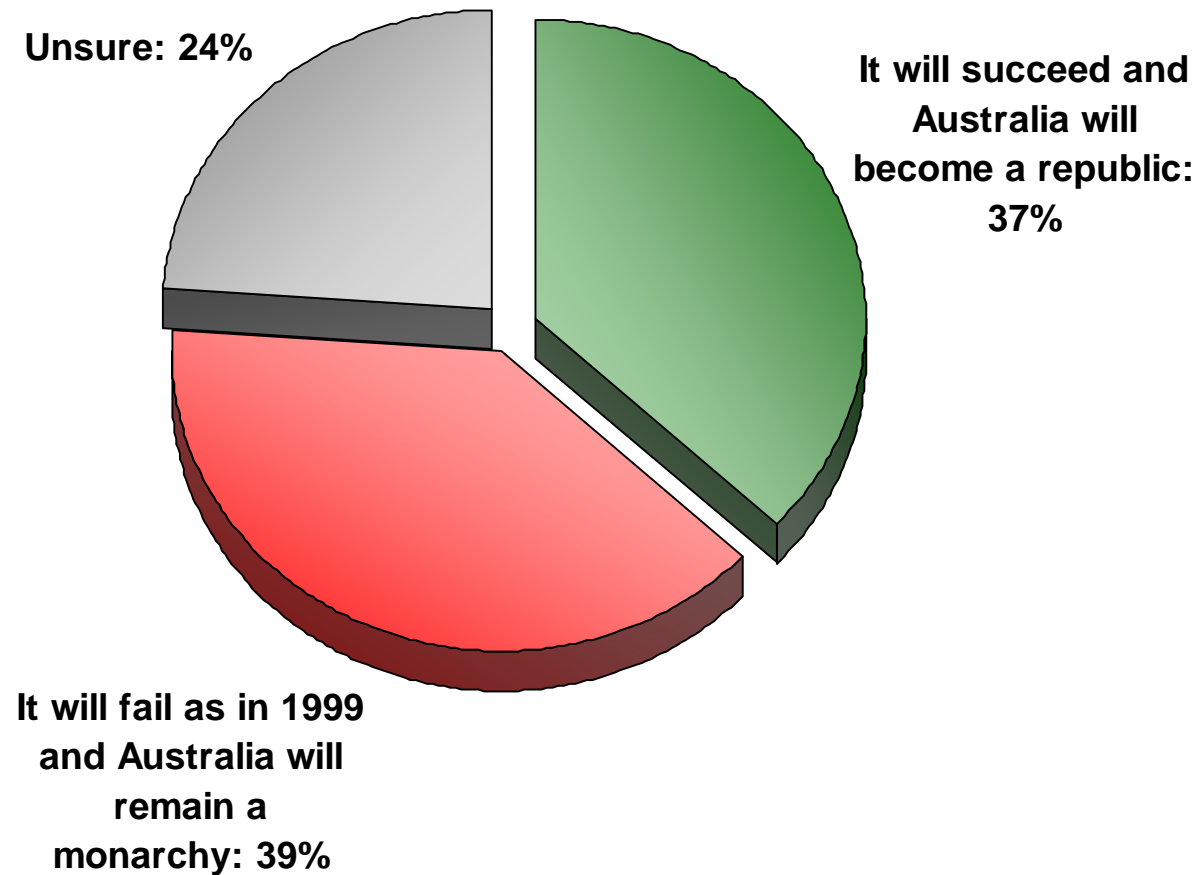
Do you support or oppose the Federal Government holding another referendum on Australia becoming a republic during the next parliamentary term, which will likely run from 2010-2013?



Expectations: second time around,
will it succeed or fail?

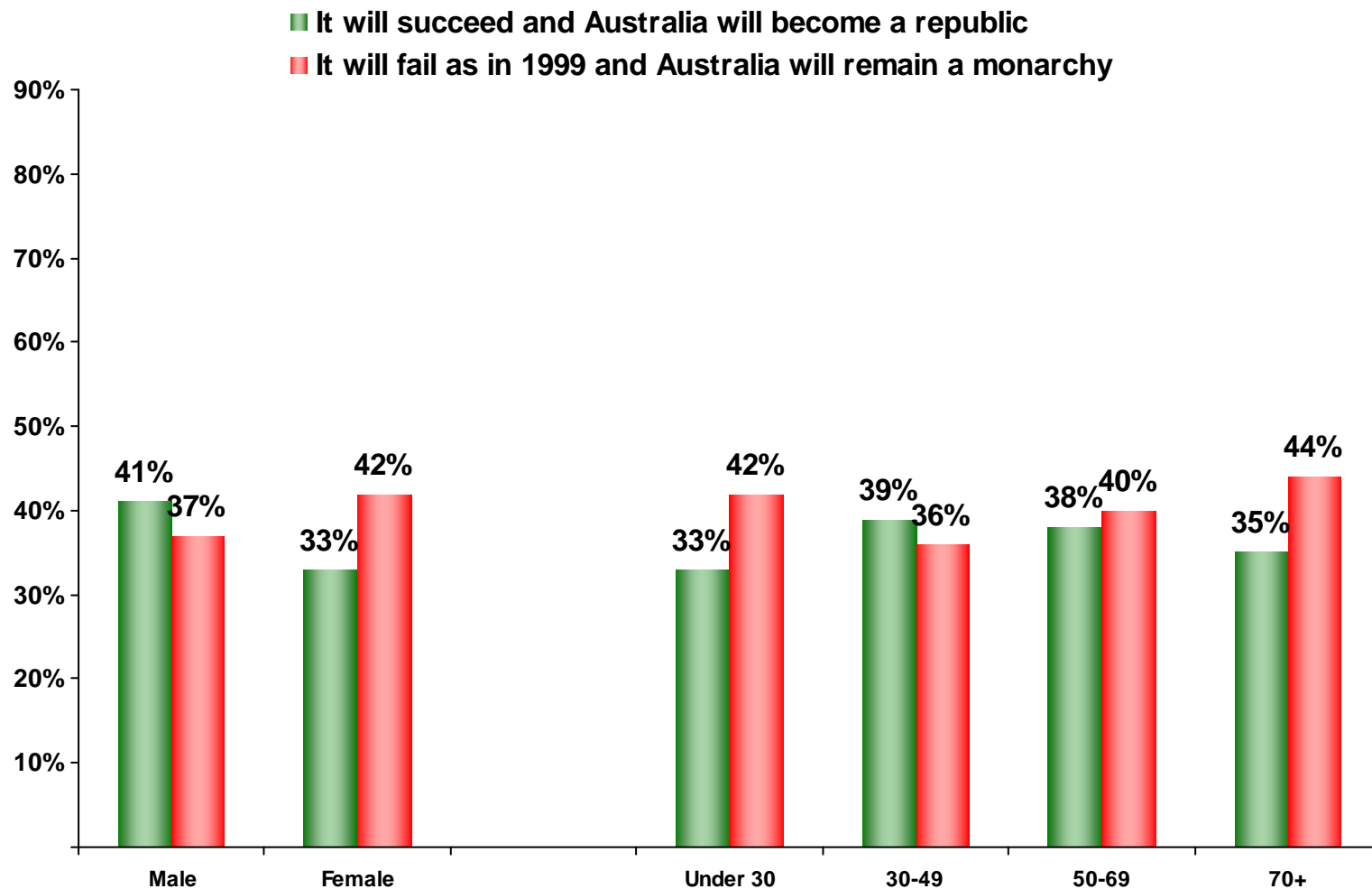
Failure expected by a nose but many unsure

If such a referendum were held, do you think...



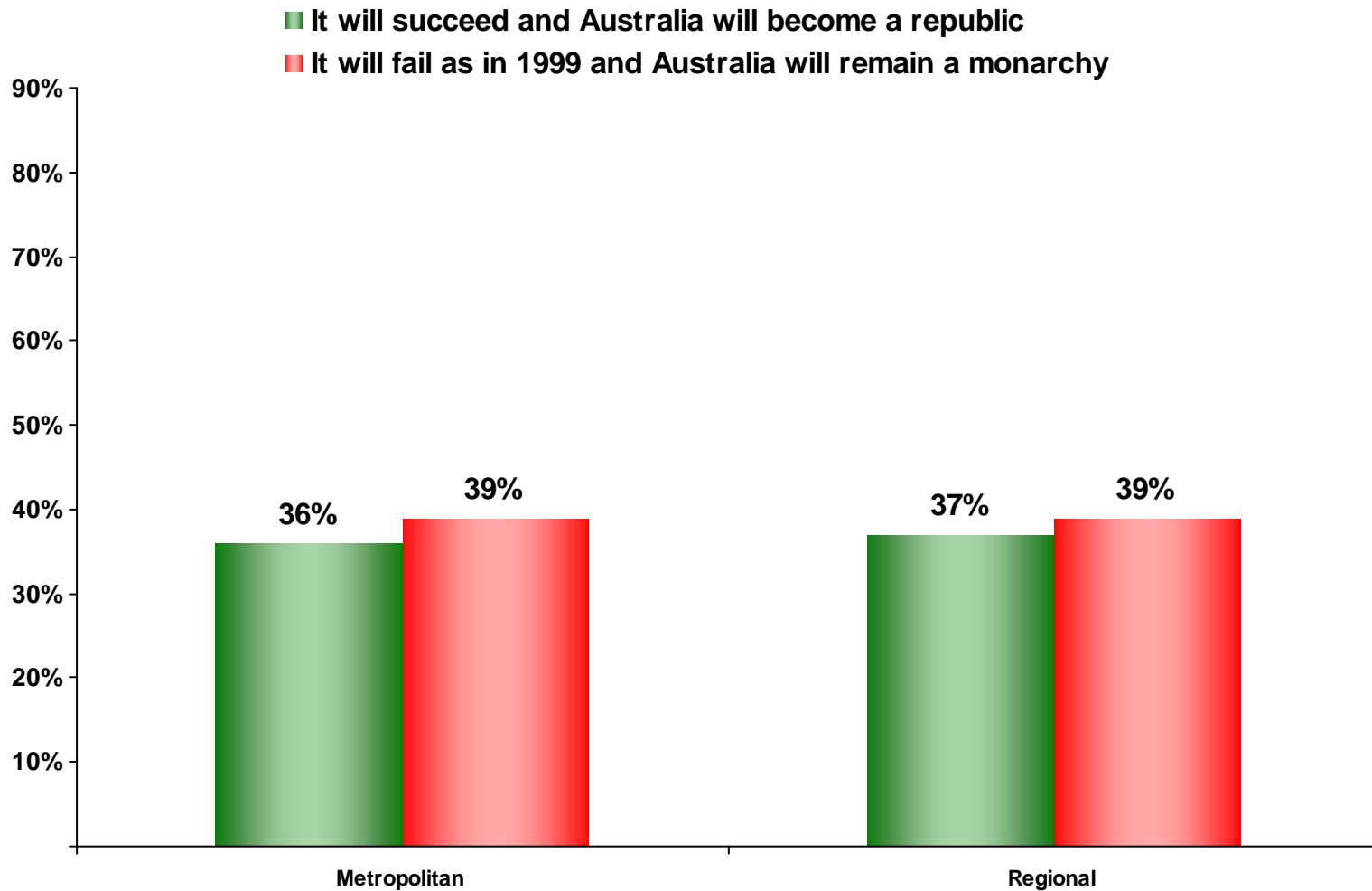
Expectations mirror support except among the under 30s

If such a referendum were held, do you think...



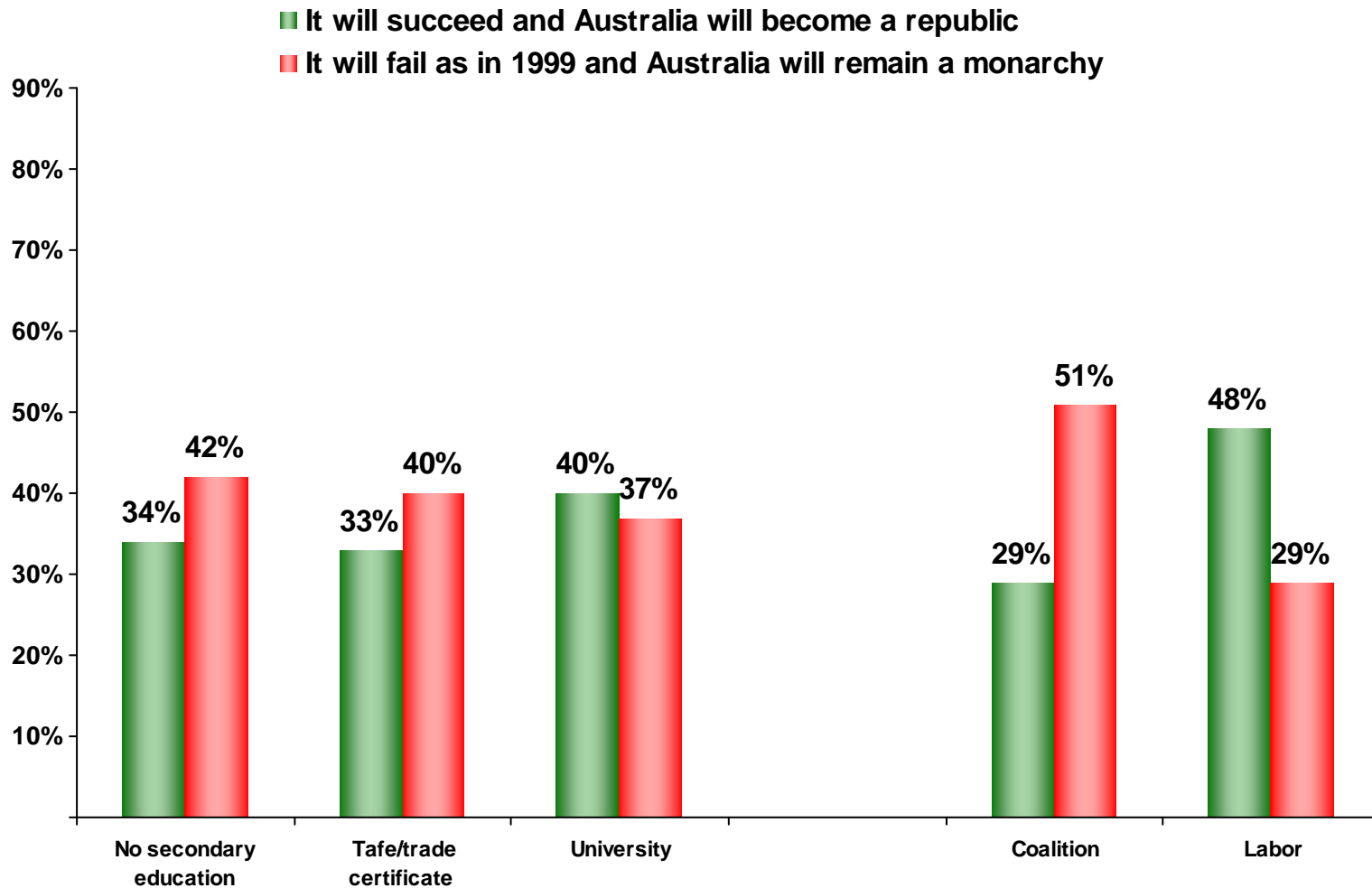
Metro & regional views the same

If such a referendum were held, do you think...



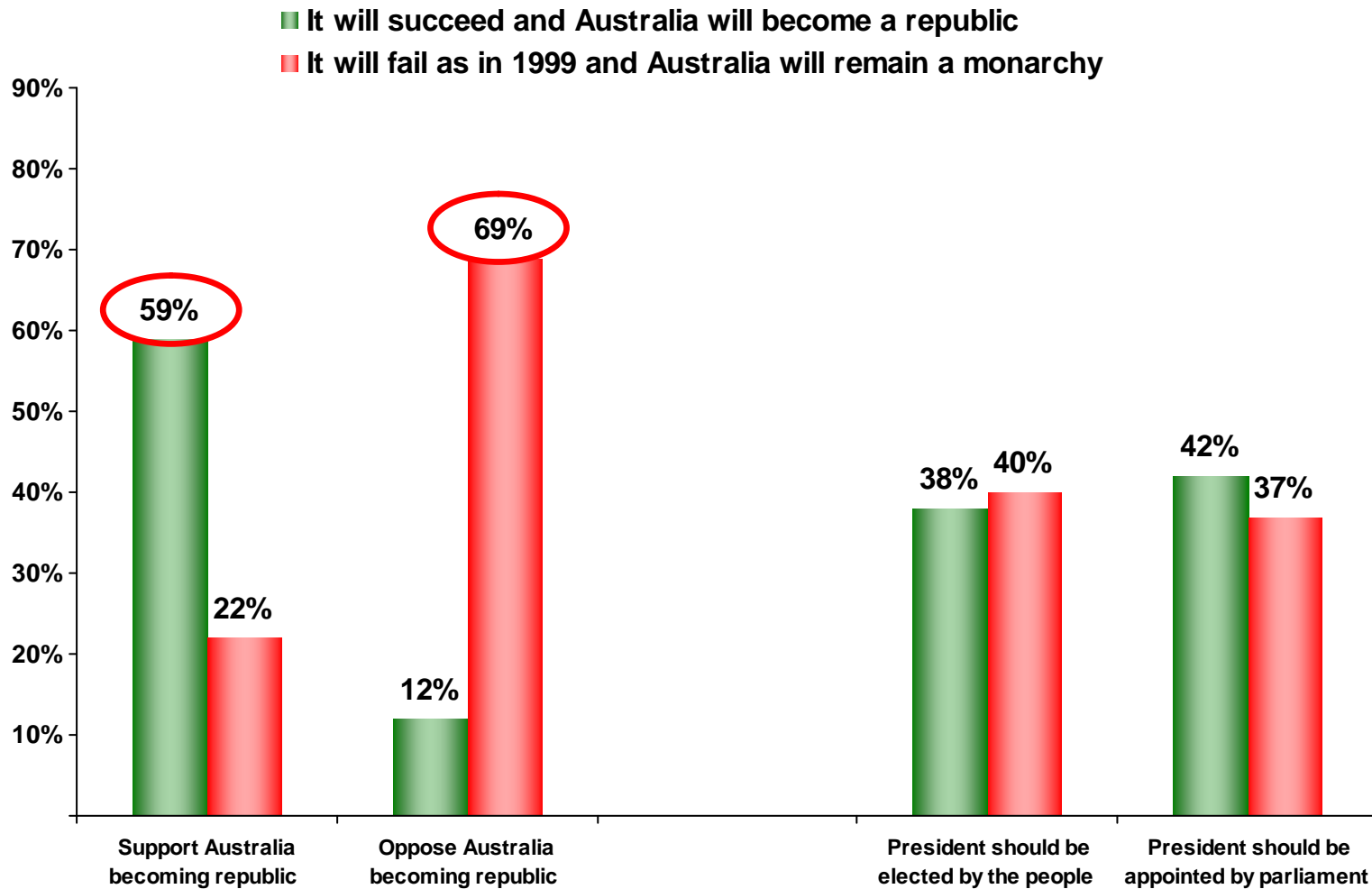
Among other groups, strong correlation between support and expectation

If such a referendum were held, do you think...



Monarchists are more optimistic

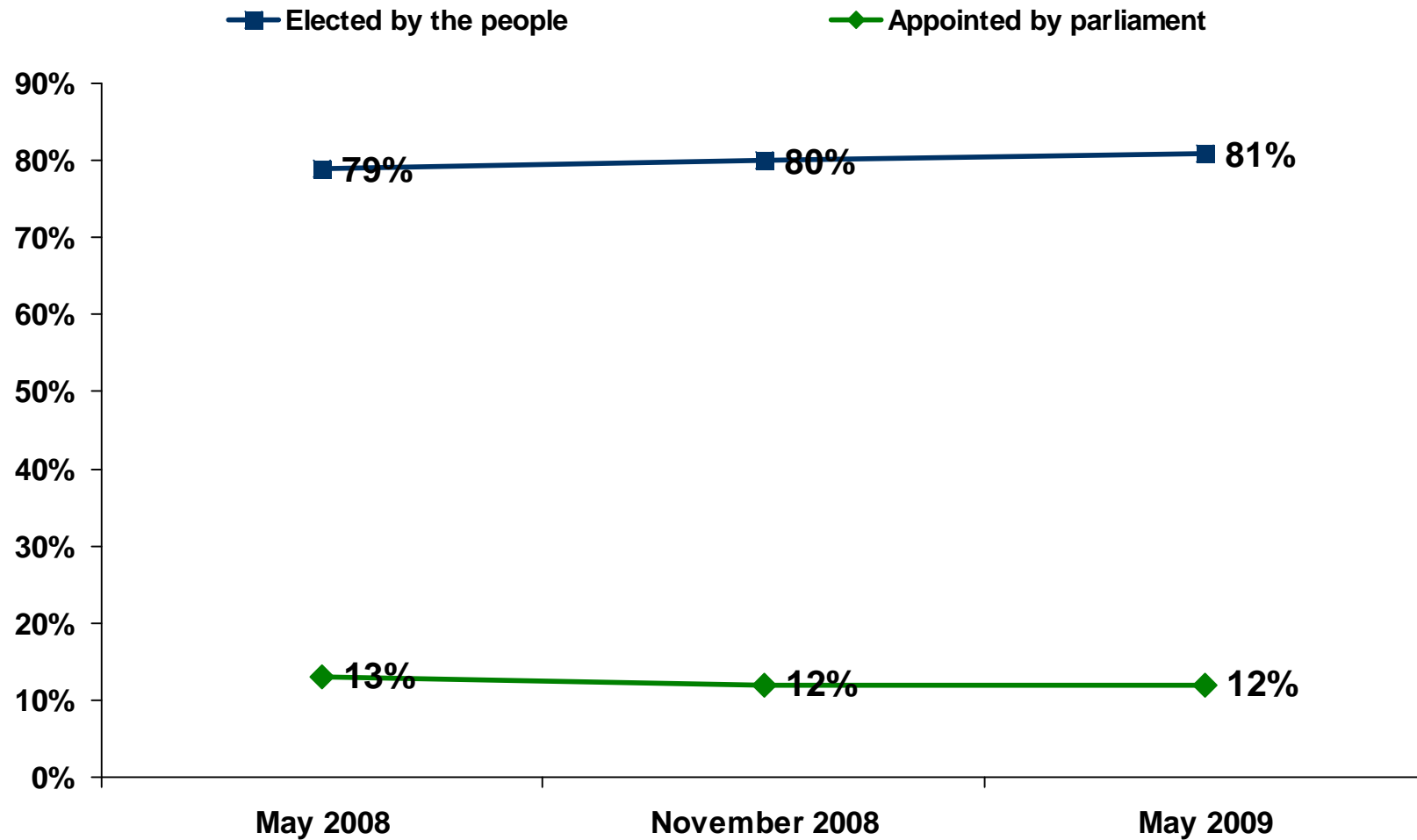
If such a referendum were held, do you think...



Appointment or direct election

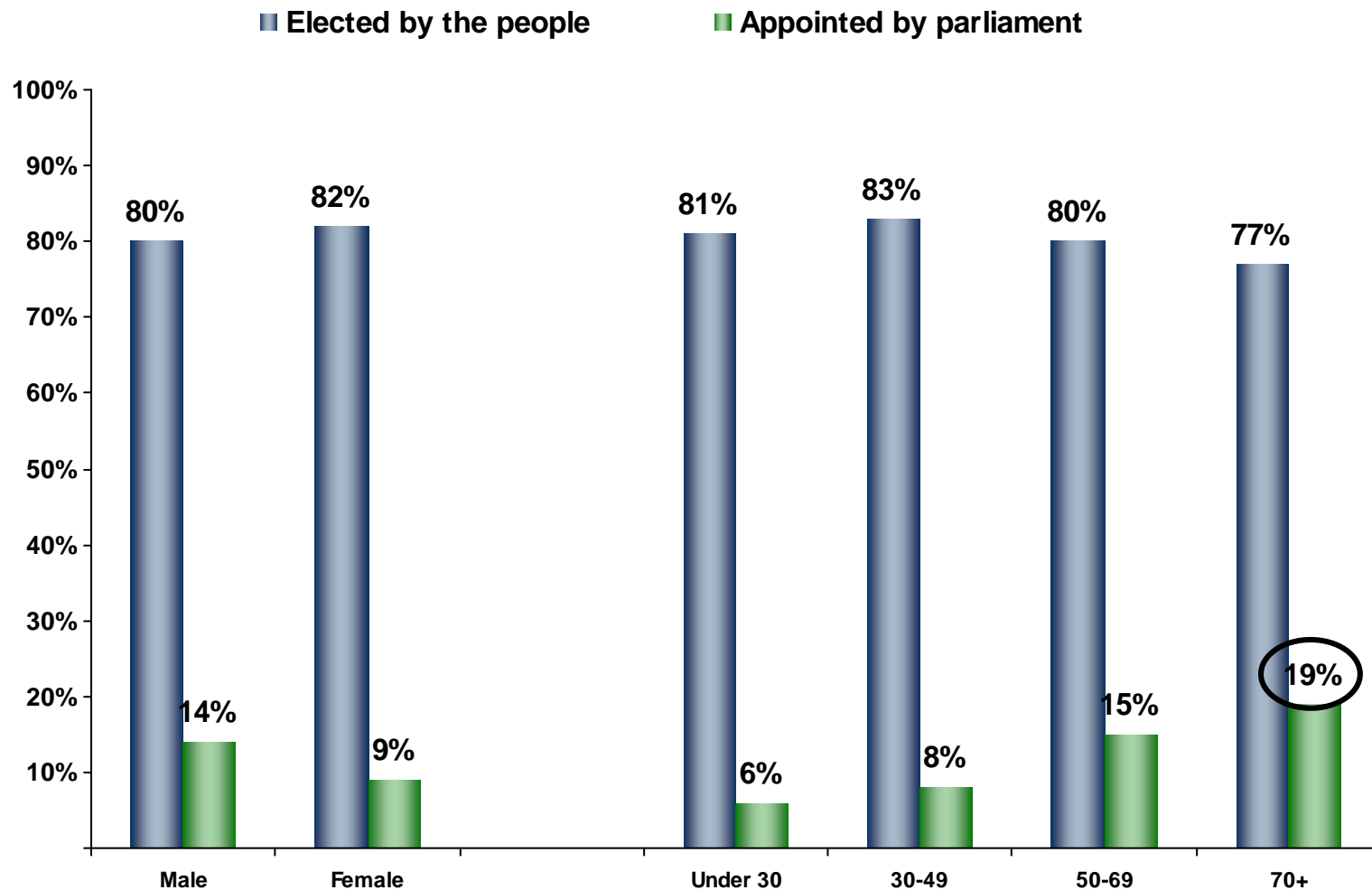
Preference for direct election is overwhelming

Suppose Australia did become a republic with a president taking over the role of the general governor as head of state, should the president be...*



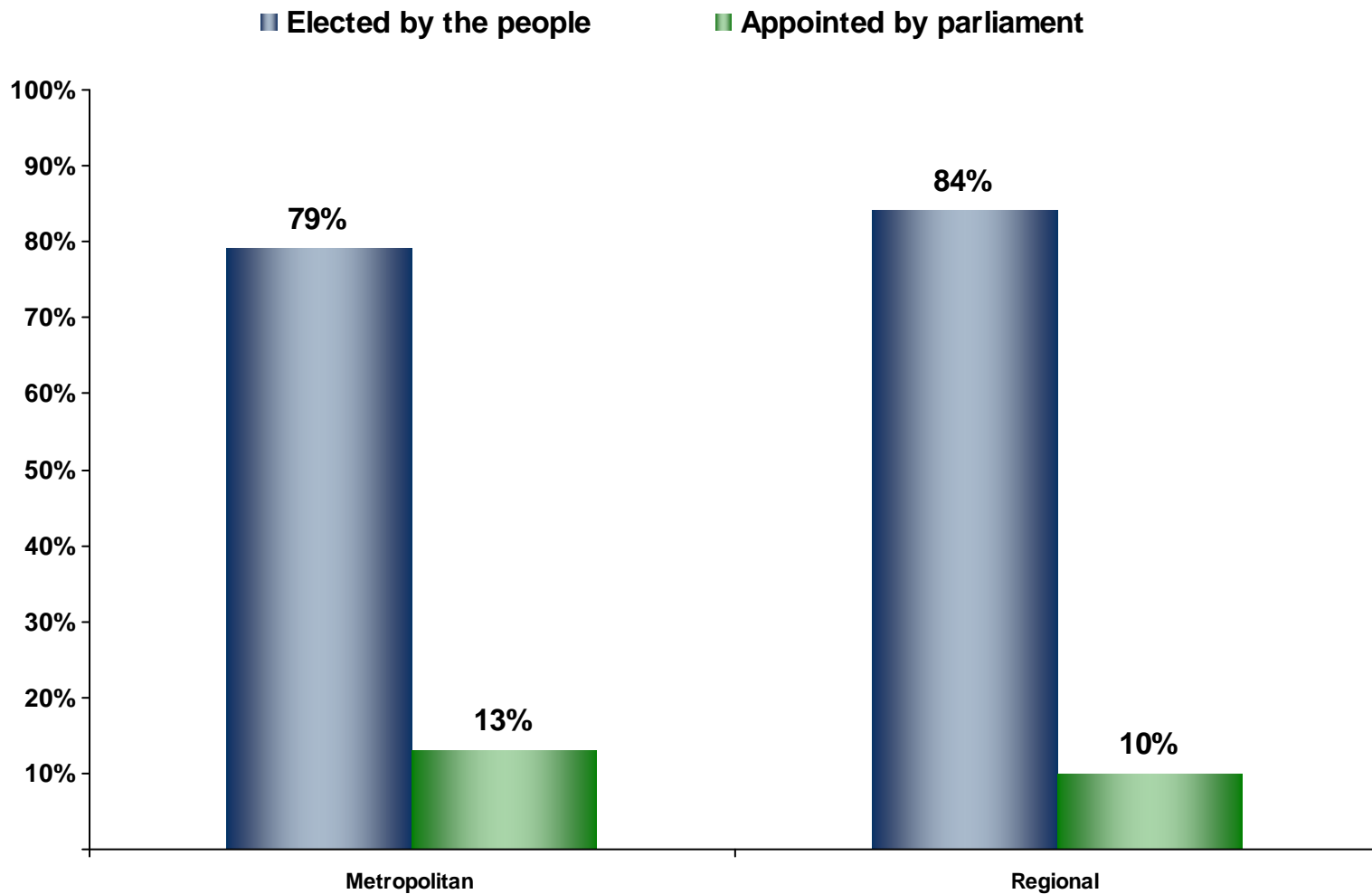
Consistent across all age and gender segments

Suppose Australia did become a republic with a president taking over the role of the general governor as head of state, should the president be...



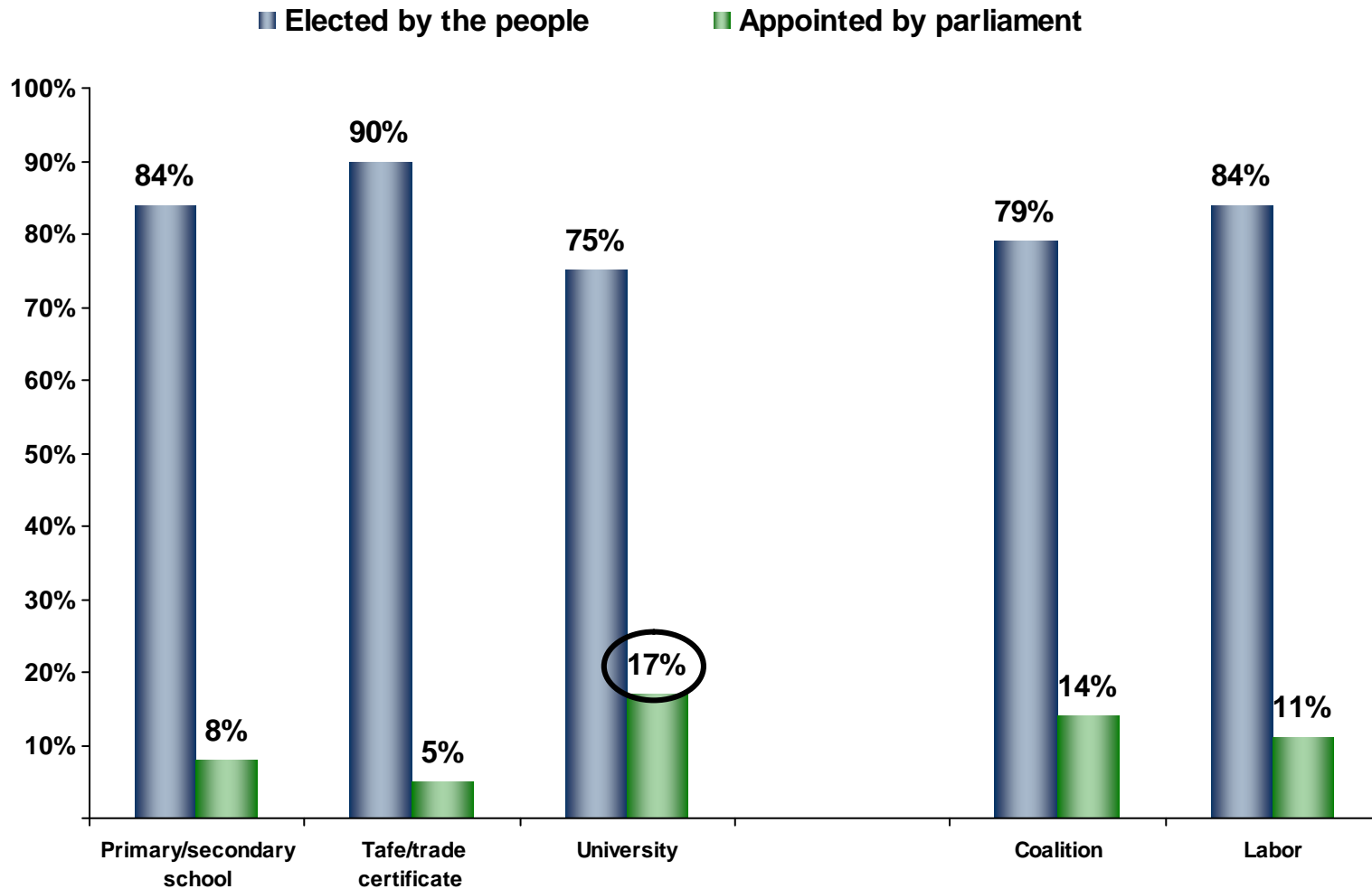
Ditto

Suppose Australia did become a republic with a president taking over the role of the general governor as head of state, should the president be...



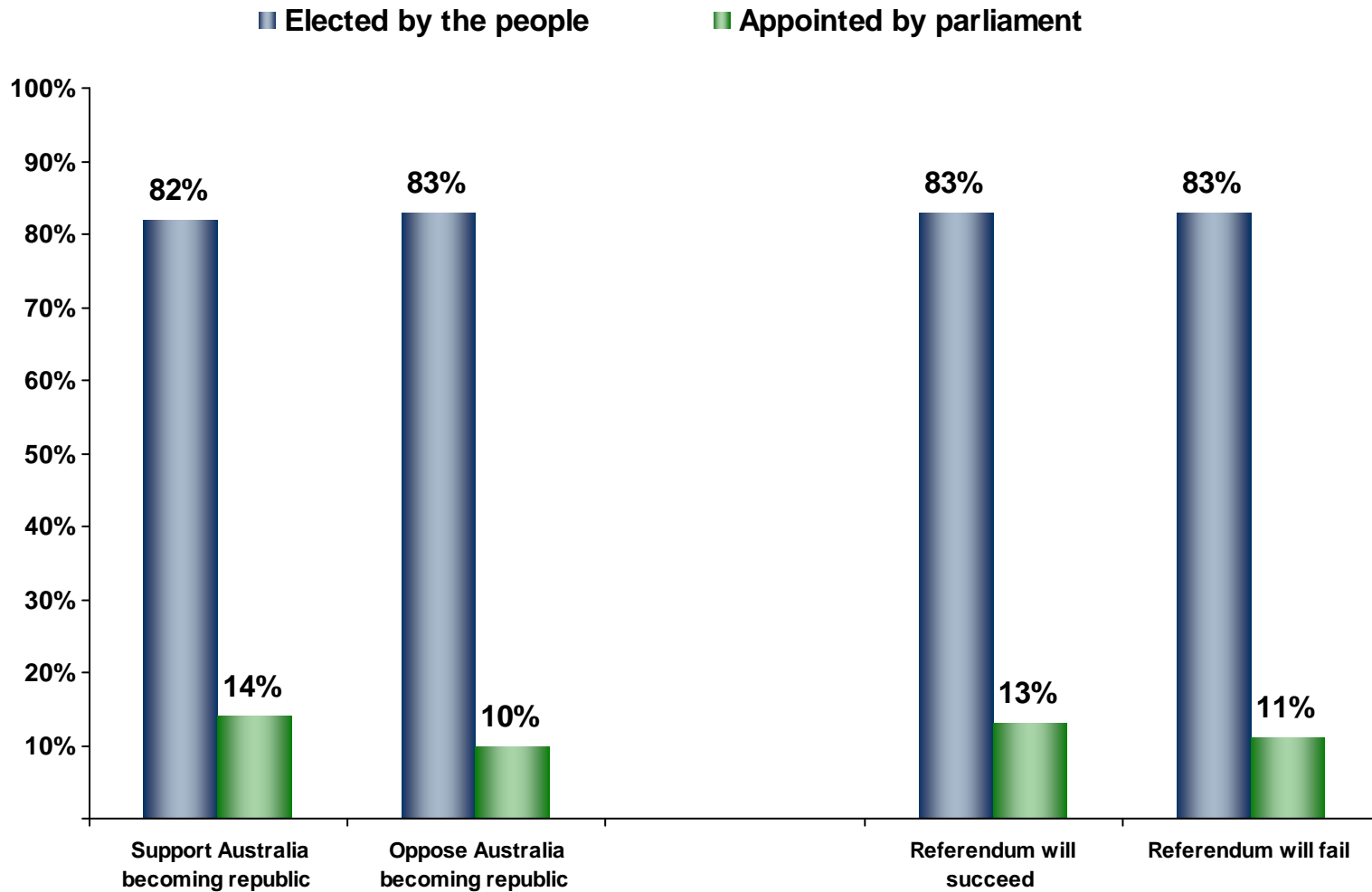
And again

Suppose Australia did become a republic with a president taking over the role of the general governor as head of state, should the president be...



Republicans and monarchists have this in common

Suppose Australia did become a republic with a president taking over the role of the general governor as head of state, should the president be...



If Australia were to become a republic,
who would you like to see become
Australia's first president?

About half struggle to name anyone

- Only about half can think of anyone
 - Many give a category instead of a name, such as
 - Female
 - Not a politician
 - Not a sports person
 - An aboriginal
 - Humanitarian/bipartisan/philanthropist
 - “Someone like Barack Obama/Gough Whitlam”!

Some comments that were made:

- *A well respected and well known figure who is versed in constitutional law and precedent. A former judge such as William Deane. I do not see this role as being exclusively held by lawyers but initially yes, as the arrangements would need to be bedded down and adapted to the new circumstances.*
- *As long as the citizens of Australia vote for the president I don't mind. Do we have an Aussie Barack Obama?*
- *The Federal Government should put forward a list of at least six candidates, chosen on a bi-partisan basis, and let the people decide by an outright majority vote for one of the candidates. The candidates should come from a variety of backgrounds just as the current G-G is chosen e.g. religious, military, business, political backgrounds.*
- *This is one of my reasons why I oppose a republic. Cannot think of someone for this job*
- *Unsure, but please, not a sportsperson! Australia is obsessed with putting sportsmen and sportswomen on a pedestal!*

Those most often nominated to be first president [1]

	Appoint by parliament	Direct election	TOTAL	
	%	%	%	
Kevin Rudd	2	24	20	
Quentin Bryce	18	9	10	
John Howard	7	9	9	
Julia Gillard	5	5	5	
Peter Cosgrove	5	5	5	
Peter Costello	4	5	5	
Paul Keating	2	3	3	
Gough Whitlam	4	2	3	
Dick Smith	2	2	2	
Malcolm Turnbull	4	2	2	
Peter Garrett	2	2	2	
Bob Brown	0	3	2	
Jeff Kennett	0	3	2	
Anna Bligh	0	2	2	
Barry Jones	7	1	2	
Michael Kirby	9	0	2	
Joe Hockey	0	2	2	

Key

Politicians in blue

G-Gs, governors in green

Sportspeople in red

Others nominated by at least 1% of the sample [2]

	Appoint by parliament	Direct election	TOTAL
Bob Hawke	2	1	1
Gustav Nossal	7	0	1
Mike Jeffrey	4	1	1
David Koch	0	2	1
Eddie Maguire	0	2	1
Sir William Deane	2	1	1
Lowitja O'Donoghue	2	1	1
Tim Fischer	4	1	1
Hugh Jackman	0	1	1
Natasha Stott Despoja	0	1	1
Malcolm Fraser	4	0	1
Marie Bashir	2	1	1
Kim Beazley	2	1	1
Glenn McGrath	2	0	1
Noel Pearson	2	0	1
Sir Ninian Stephen	2	0	1
Alan Jones	0	1	1
Christine Nixon	0	1	1
Ernie Dingo	0	1	1
Les Twentyman	0	1	1
Lindsay Fox	0	1	1
Pauline Hanson	0	1	1
Ricky Ponting	0	1	1
Rolf Harris	0	1	1

Key

Politicians in blue

G-Gs, governors in green

Sportspeople in red

Some observations:

- Australians favouring direct election are more likely to nominate a politician
 - Those wanting the president to be appointed by the parliament more commonly suggest a past or present G-G, governor or judge
- The idea or fear that Australians will elect a sportsperson or celebrity is not supported

About UMR

Australia's Leading Research and Issues Management Company

UMR is the company of choice for leaders and decision-makers, because we turn high quality research into useful hard-headed strategic advice. UMR Research has provided significant insights, advice and campaign management to decision-makers who have brought about major change in Australia and New Zealand for Governments and business.

UMR is a full-service opinion research, issues management and campaign company, based in Australia and Zealand, working across the Asia Pacific region. We specialise in political research and campaigns, corporate reputation, issues management and social marketing.

We have over 20 years experience developing a deep understanding of the views and opinions of Australians and New Zealanders. Our team of expert researchers are seasoned professionals who combine extensive experience with a deep understanding of the public mindset.

Contact:

Level 1, Suite 105 • 332-342 Oxford Street • Sydney NSW 2022 • AUSTRALIA
Tel: +61 2 9386 1622 • Fax: +61 2 9386 1633 • Email: office@umr.com.au