

# **Trends in online behaviour and technology usage**

ACMA consumer survey 2020

**Quantitative research**

September 2020



## About the research

This quantitative consumer research was undertaken to further understand trends in consumer take-up and usage of communications and media services.

The Social Research Centre (SRC) conducted the survey using their probability-based panel, Life in Australia™. 2,009 surveys were completed from 9–21 June 2020, representative of the Australian population aged 18 years and over.

See the full methodology for sample sizes of subgroups and additional notes.

## researchacma

The ACMA is undertaking research to:

- > support time-series tracking of patterns of consumer communications and media use
- > inform regulatory development by providing an evidence base on consumer behaviour, adoption of and attitudes towards media and communications services in Australia.

This research is part of the [ACMA research program 2019–20](#).

# Key research findings

## Our reliance on the internet and communications services has increased

In 2020, more Australian adults accessed the internet, with increased participation in many activities and services since 2019.



### Devices used

- > Nearly all Australians (99%) accessed the internet in the previous 6 months in 2020 (up from 90% in 2019).
- > Australian internet users, on average, used 4.4 types of devices to access the internet (increase from 4.0 types in 2019).



### Smart devices

- > The most popular smart devices used were smart TVs, wearable devices and voice-controlled smart speakers.



### Internet-based activities

- > Engagement in online activities increased significantly in 2020—this is likely to be driven by COVID-19 restrictions.
- > Emailing, general web browsing, watching videos and banking/paying bills were the most common internet activities undertaken.



### Services used to communicate

- > More Australians are using communications services.
- > Fixed-line home phone usage continues to decline—from 44% in 2019 to 40% in 2020.



### Use of communications apps

- > Over three-quarters (77%) of Australian adults used a communication app in the previous 6 months (up from 67% in 2019).
- > Facebook Messenger was the most popular app (66%), followed by Zoom (43%).



### Social networking sites and apps

- > Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Australian adults used a social networking app in the previous 6 months (up from 63% in 2019).
- > Facebook was the most popular social networking app used by 63% of users.

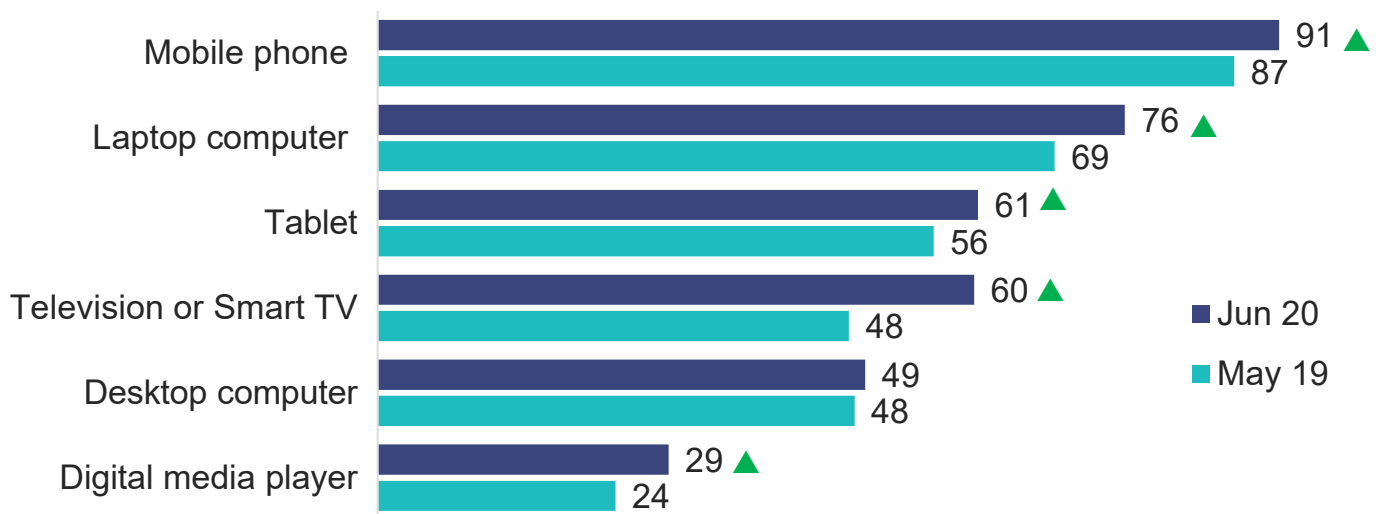


## Devices used to go online

In 2020, more Australians were online and, on average, used a larger range of devices to access the internet

99% of Australian adults accessed the internet in the previous 6 months to June 2020 (up from 90% in 2019).

### Top devices used to go online\* (%)

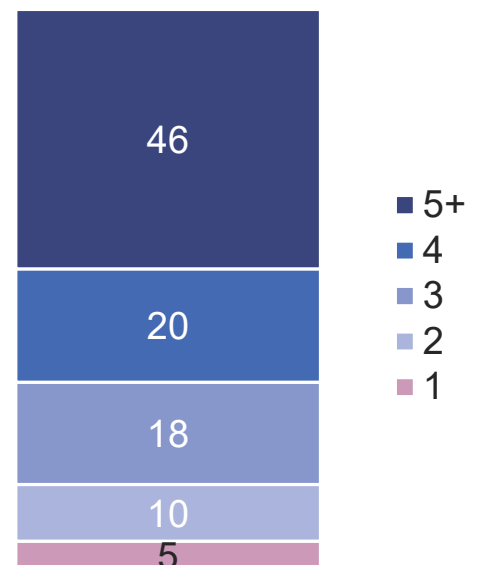


▲ Significantly different to prior year at the 95% confidence level

### Number of types of devices used to go online\* (%)

> 46% of online Australians used 5+ types of devices to access the internet

> 4.4 types of devices were used, on average, to access the internet, up from 4.0 in 2019



\*Adult internet users in the 6 months to May 2019 or June 2020.

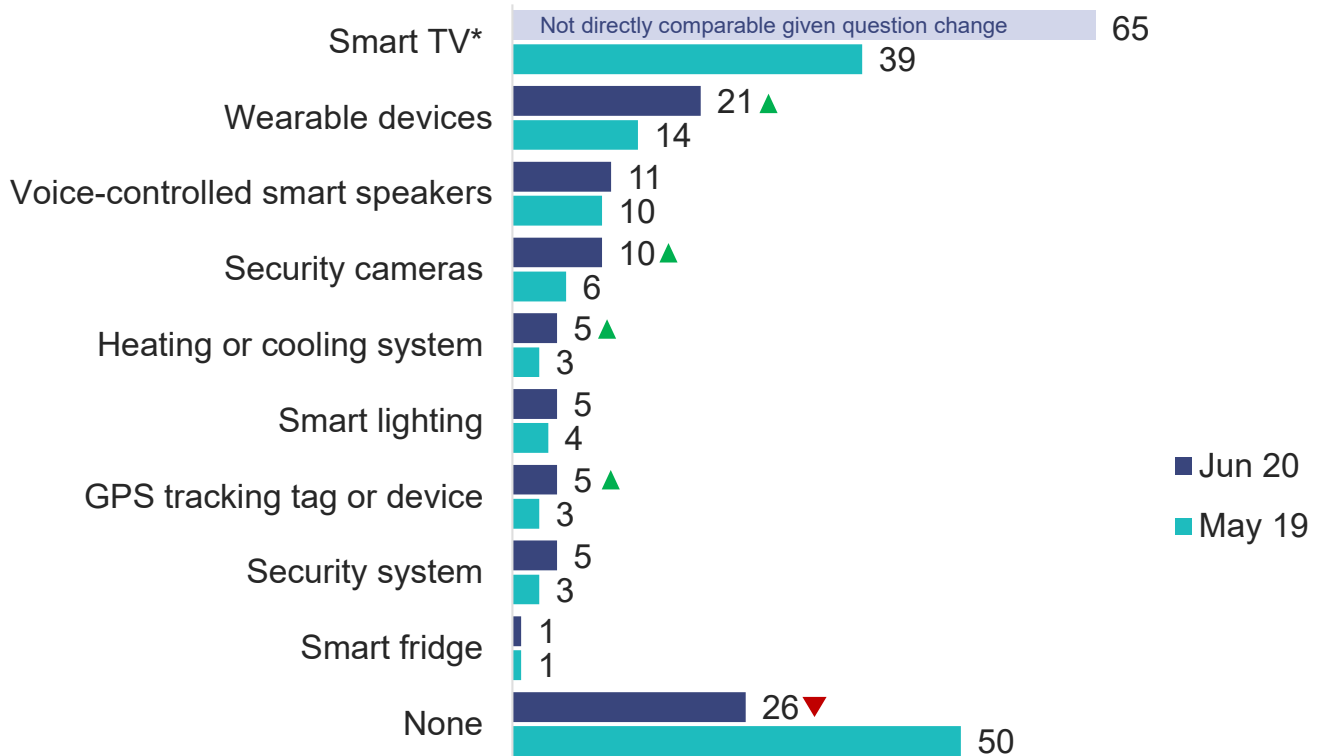


# Smart devices connected to the internet

In 2020, more Australians had a smart device connected to the internet

73% of Australian adults had used an internet-connected smart device, excluding computers, tablets and mobile phones.

## Connected smart devices (%)



▲ ▼ Significantly different to prior year at the 95% confidence level



- > **64% of Australian adults had a smart TV at home** (46% had a standard TV)
- > **1.3 types of smart devices connected to the internet** were used by Australian adults

\*Smart TV ownership asked as a separate question in 2020, including a detailed description of a 'smart TV', and is not directly comparable with other smart devices.

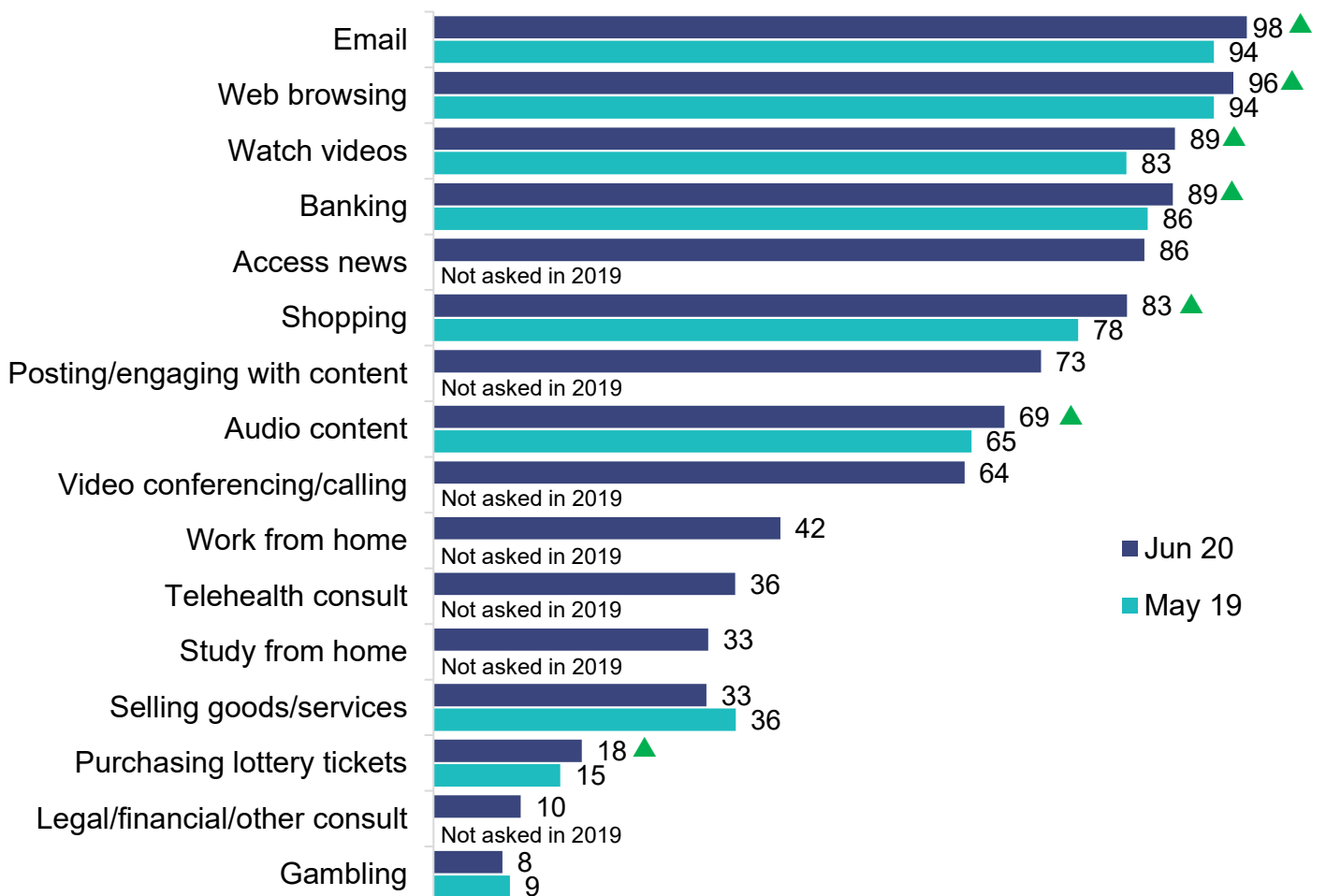


## Online activities

More Australians had participated in a wide range of online activities in the previous 6 months to June 2020, compared to 2019

From 2019 to 2020, increases in most internet activities were likely driven by COVID-19 restrictions, given there was no significant change from 2018 to 2019.

### Activities performed online in the past 6 months\* (%)



▲ Significantly different to prior year at the 95% confidence level

### Older Australians (aged 55+)\*:



- > participated less across nearly all internet activities than those aged 18–54
- > undertook more telehealth, legal, financial or other professional consultations compared to those aged 18–54

\*Adult internet users in the 6 months to May 2019 or June 2020.

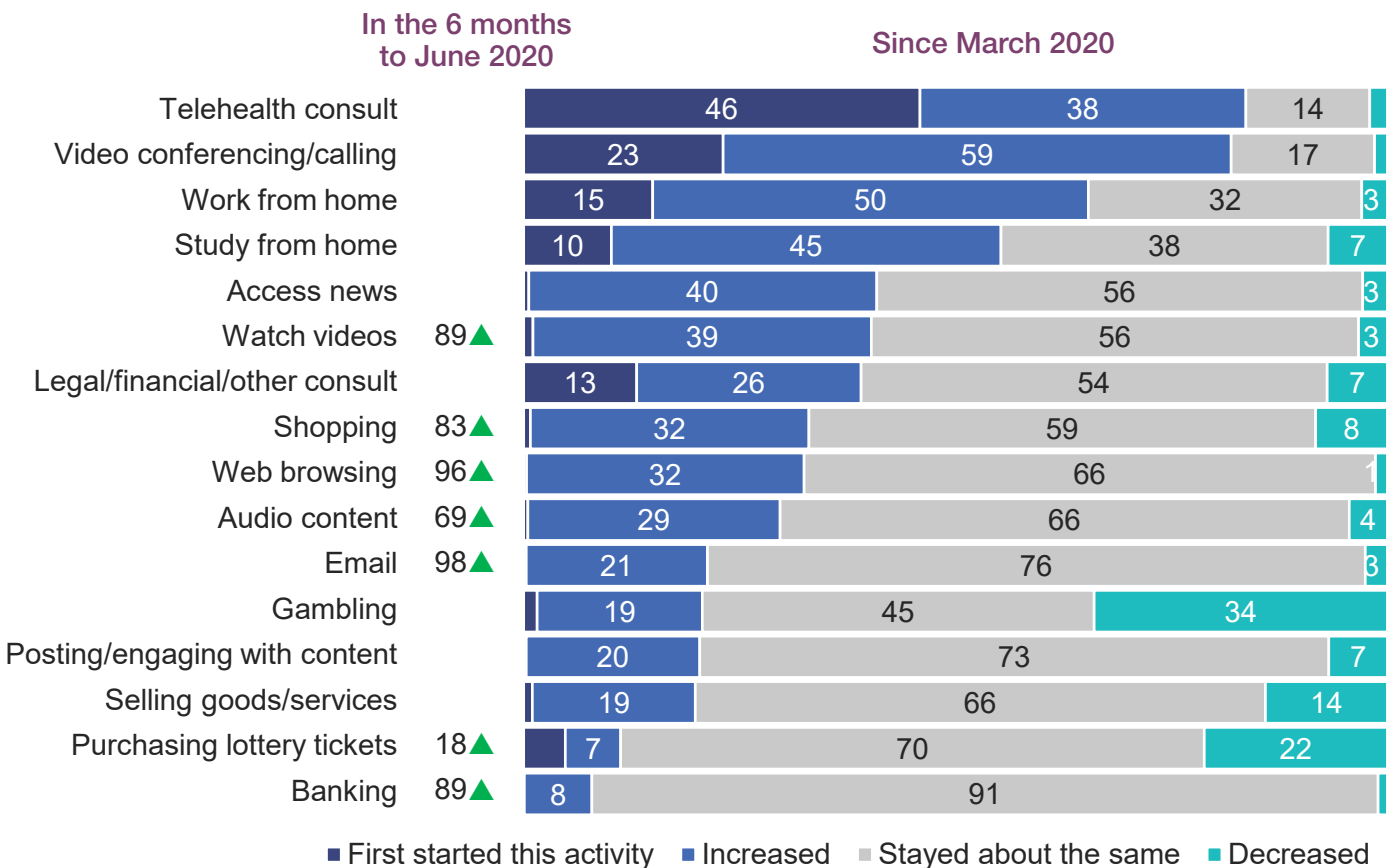


# Change in internet activities since COVID-19

**Increases in online activities observed in 2020 are likely to be driven by COVID-19 restrictions**

4 in 5 Australian adults started or increased their participation for both telehealth consultations and video conferencing/calling since COVID-19 restrictions were introduced in March 2020.

## Change in participation in online activities undertaken\* (%)



▲ Significantly different to prior year at the 95% confidence level

Since the COVID-19 restrictions were introduced in March 2020, **Australians who just started or increased various online activities were more likely to be aged 18–54 than aged 55+**. Of those who undertook each activity\*:



	18–54 years	55+ years
Working from home	71%	42%
Accessing news	46%	29%
Watching videos online	43%	32%

\*Adult internet users in the 6 months to May 2019 or June 2020.

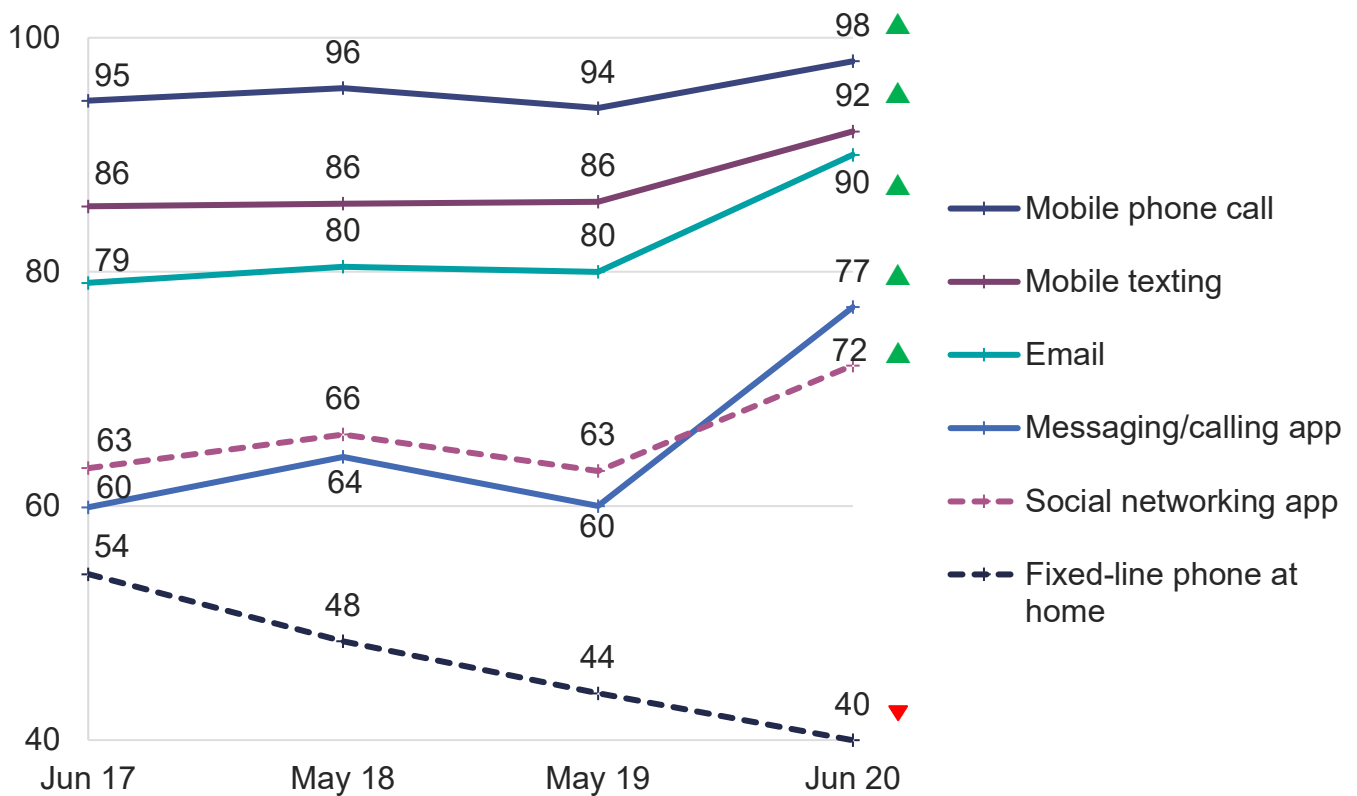


## Services used to communicate

Fixed-line telephone usage continues to decline while all other services increased in the previous 6 months to June 2020 compared to 2019

74% of Australian adults used 5+ separate communications services in the previous 6 months, down from 60% in 2019

### Use of communications services for personal purposes\* (%)



▲ ▼ Significantly different to prior year at the 95% confidence level

While more **older Australians\*** continued to use a fixed-line service at home, their **usage has declined:**



> **58%** of those aged 45+ used a fixed-line phone at home in 2020, down from 65% in 2019

\*Australian adults in the 6 months to May 2019 or June 2020.





# Use of communications apps and social networking

## Use of apps for communication and social networking has grown since COVID-19

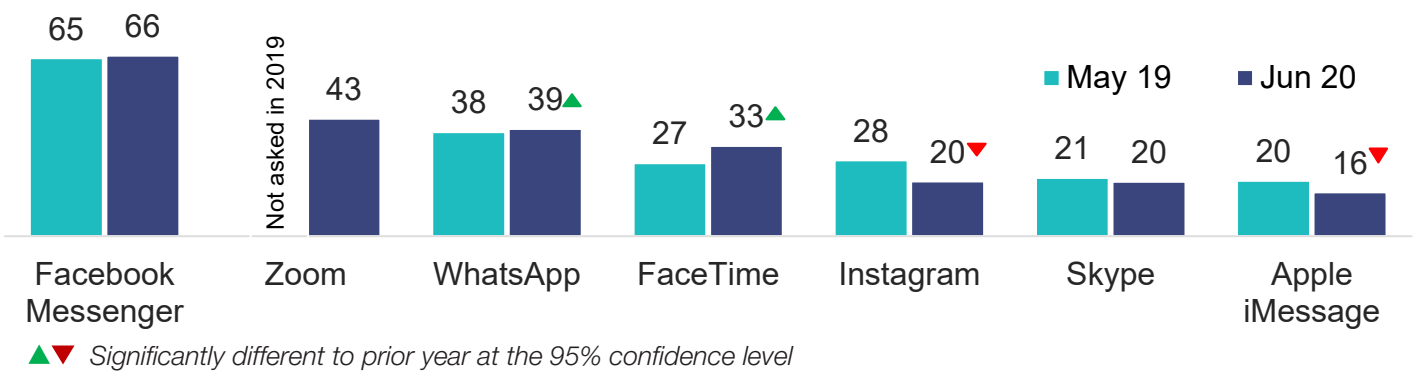
### Use of communications apps\*:

- > 77% used an app to communicate via messages, voice or video (67% in 2019):
  - > 73% voice calls (42% in 2019)
  - > 47% video calls (41% in 2019)

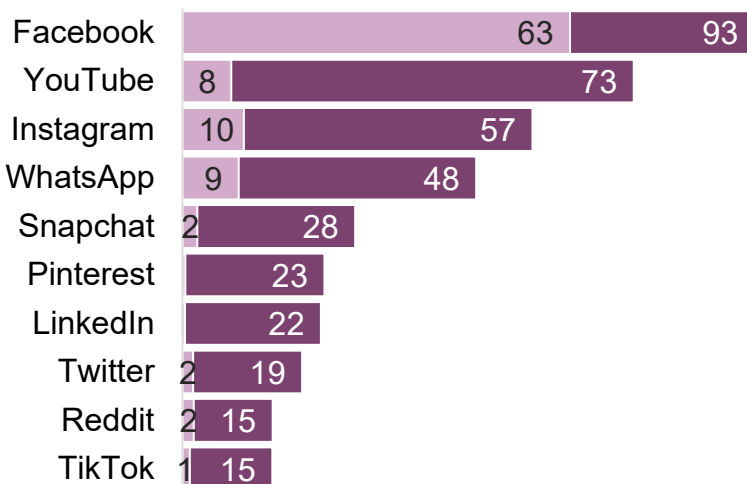
### Number of different apps used to communicate\*:

- > 55% used 1–3 (57% in 2019)
- > 35% used 4+ (27% in 2019)
- > 10% used 0 (16% in 2019)

### Top communications apps used\* (%)



### Top 10 social networking sites used † (%)



> 72% of Australian adults used a social networking app, up from 63% in 2019

#### Since COVID-19 restrictions:

- > 36% increased their use of social networking
- > 59% reported no change in their usage

■ Used most often ■ Used in the previous 6 months

\*Adult internet users in the 6 months to May 2019 or June 2020.

†Adults who used an app for social networking in the 6 months to June 2020.