

HOW DO AUSTRALIANS MAKE MAJOR APPLIANCE PURCHASES FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION?

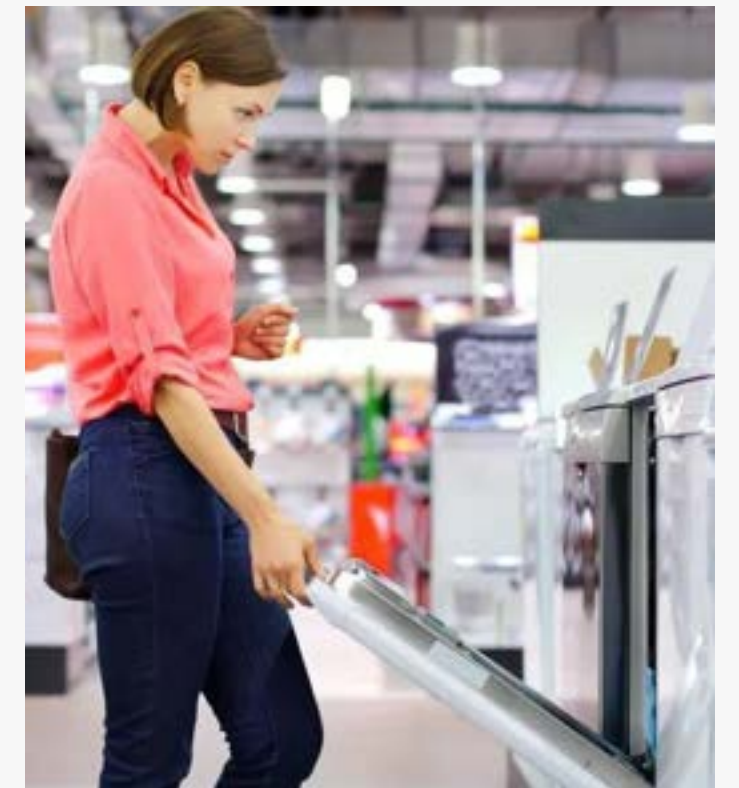
Marianne Campbell
Senior Researcher
CONSUMER POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

AN INVESTIGATION OF CONSUMER
PURCHASING BEHAVIOURS IN A
COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

WHY ARE WE HERE?

CPRC received a grant from Energy Consumers Australia to explore the consumer purchase journey of large home appliances as part of Australia's journey to electrification.

This report showcases findings from Stage A - Information Audit and Mystery Shop, designed to capture information at the point of sale when shopping for a fridge, washing machine, clothes dryer, electric oven, electric heater or split system airconditioner.



STUDY AIM

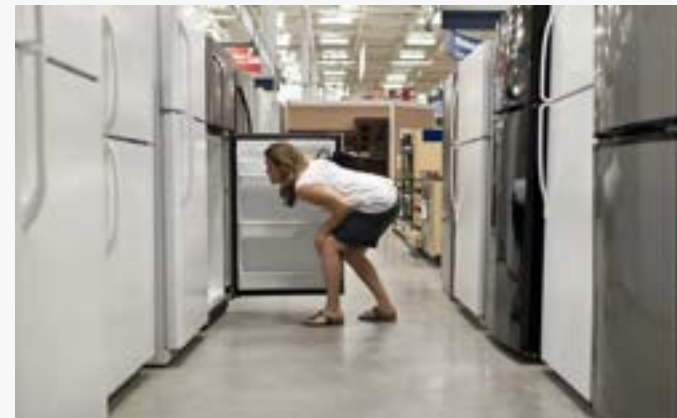
To understand the consumer decision-making process of buying a large household appliance, when faced with a plethora of information and marketing at the point of display/purchase.



Appliances account for about 25% of household energy use, and selecting energy-efficient models can lead to significant savings on energy bills.

OUR HYPOTHESIS & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Consumers find it difficult to navigate information when purchasing a large home appliance



Information audit

What information is at the point of sale of large home appliances? What are retail assistants telling consumers?

Consumer decision-making

How do consumers make purchase decisions? What inputs do they use? How do consumers interpret and respond to these inputs?

Potential to mislead

Where does energy-efficiency, sustainability and durability information fit? Are consumers being misled when buying large home appliances?

Information gaps and needs

What do consumers need to make more informed purchase decisions?

WHAT'S NEXT?

STAGE A



STAGE B



STAGE C



REPORT RELEASE



STAGE A. MYSTERY SHOP
[COMPLETE]

STAGE B. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

STAGE C. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

REPORT RELEASE MID
2025

STAGE A. WHAT INPUTS DO CONSUMERS HAVE TO NAVIGATE?

MYSTERY SHOP

An information audit of the point of display of large, energy-intensive home appliances.



MYSTERY SHOPPING OVERVIEW

What did we want to know?

What information are consumers exposed to at the point of display when purchasing large, energy-intensive home appliances?

What could have the potential to mislead consumers?

What did we do?

An information audit of the point of display of large, energy-intensive home appliances.

We conducted a mystery shop of 120 energy-intensive home appliances across 5 states as well as a series of online shops.

How did we do it?

1. Asked sales assistants to help them find an appliance that was good for the environment and energy bills
2. Recorded details of information provided, and
3. Photographed information at the point of display.

NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

BREADTH OF STORES & APPLIANCES



WE WANTED DIVERSITY IN STORE TYPE, SIZE & LOCATION, WHILE MAKING SURE ALL STORES HAD RELEVANT STOCK

SALES ASSISTANT INTERACTIONS



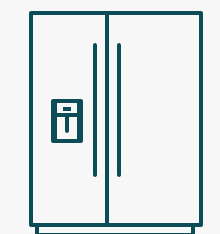
WE NEEDED TO STANDARDISE THE GUIDANCE PROVIDED TO EACH MYSTERY SHOPPER & SEMI-SCRIPT THE CONVERSATION WITH THE SALES ASSISTANT

INFORMATION COLLECTION

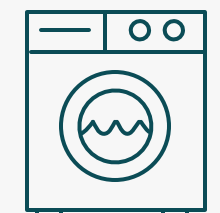


WE WANTED STANDARDISED RECORDING OF ALL INFORMATION TO MAKE SURE ALL SHOPPERS CAPTURED RELEVANT INFORMATION IN DETAIL

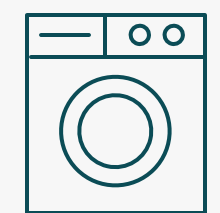
120 APPLIANCES MYSTERY SHOPPED



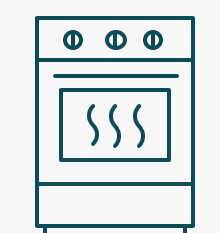
39 fridges



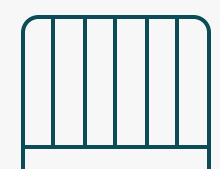
35 washing machines



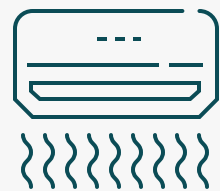
13 clothes dryers



15 electric ovens



9 electric heaters



9 split system air-conditioners

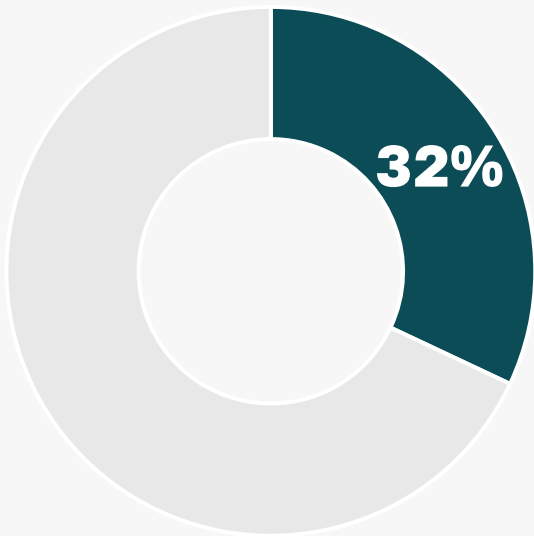
	Harvey Norman	Good Guys	JB Hi-Fi	Betta Home Living	Bing Lee	Bi-Rite	Other smaller stores	TOTAL
Adelaide	13	6	5	-	-	-	2	26
Brisbane	4	4	1	2	-	2	6	19
Melbourne	8	4	-	1	-	-	6	19
Perth	6	4	2	2	-	-	2	16
Sydney	4	4	-	4	6	2	-	20
Online	2	2	2	-	2	2	10	20
TOTAL	37	24	10	9	8	6	26	120

WHAT WE FOUND

SHOPPERS FACED MISLEADING
SALES TACTICS FROM SALES
ASSISTANTS

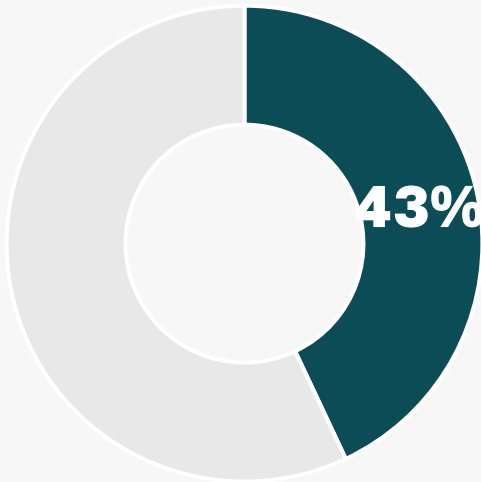


USED VAGUE GREEN CLAIMS

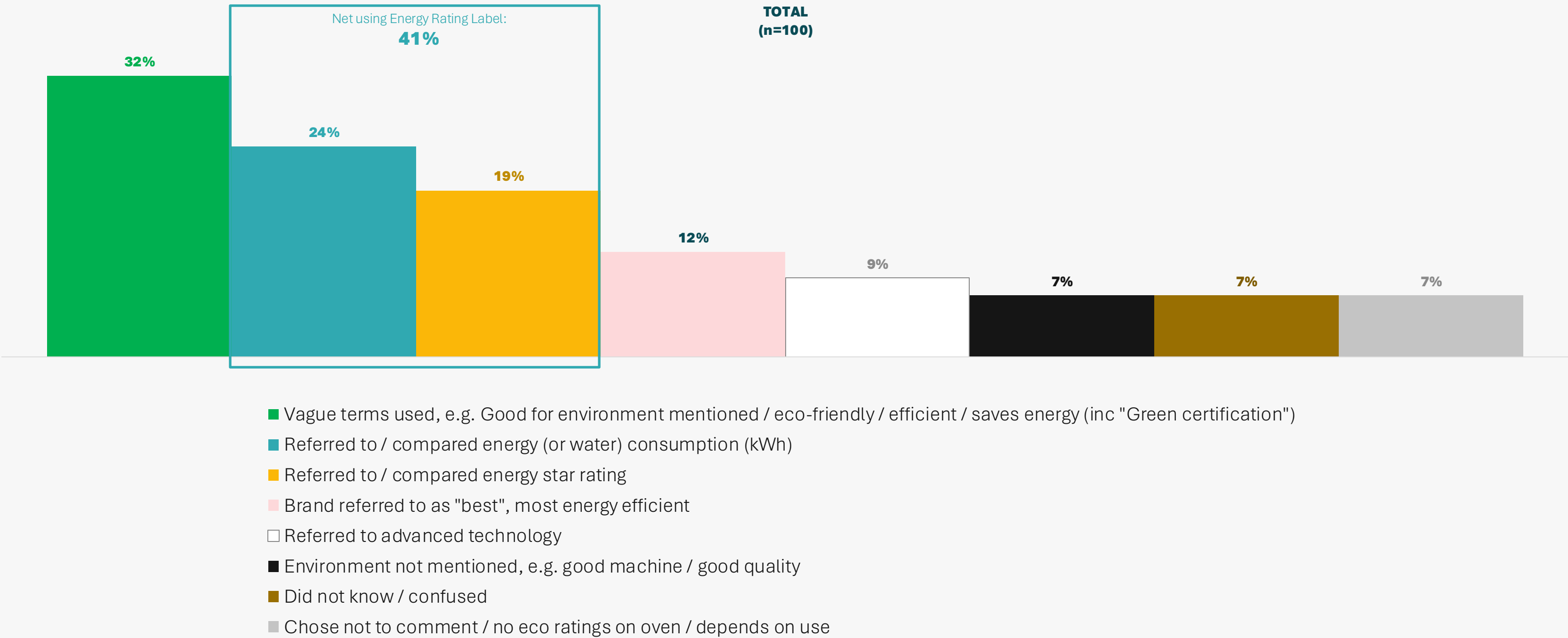


“The sales assistant referred to the fridge as being good for the environment. They said that the fridge was eco-friendly and good on power.”

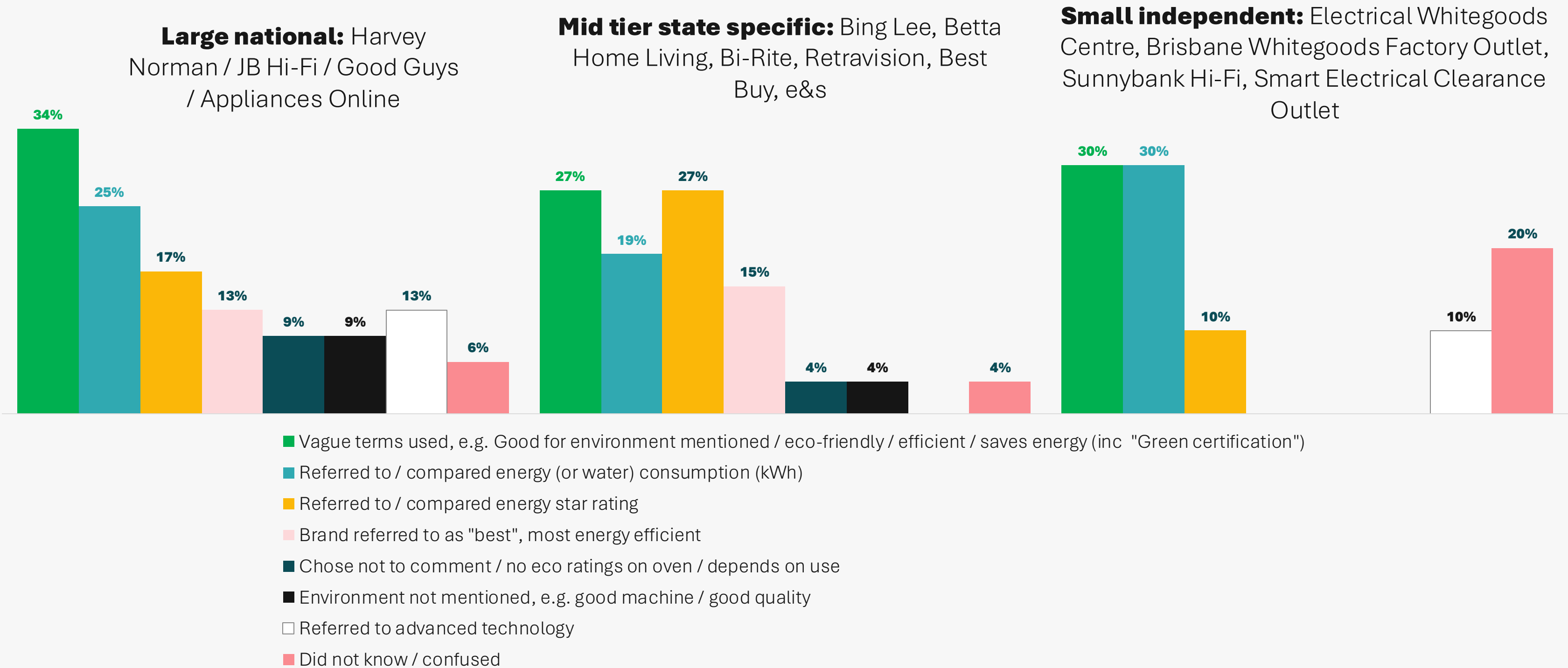
ENCOURAGED EXTENDED WARRANTY



SALES ASSISTANTS MOST OFTEN RELIED ON THE ENERGY RATING OR USED VAGUE TERMS.



SALES ASSISTANTS MOST OFTEN RELIED ON THE ENERGY RATING OR USED VAGUE TERMS.





**39% OF APPLIANCE
DISPLAYS SHOWED
VAGUE GREEN CLAIMS**

MOSTLY FOUND:

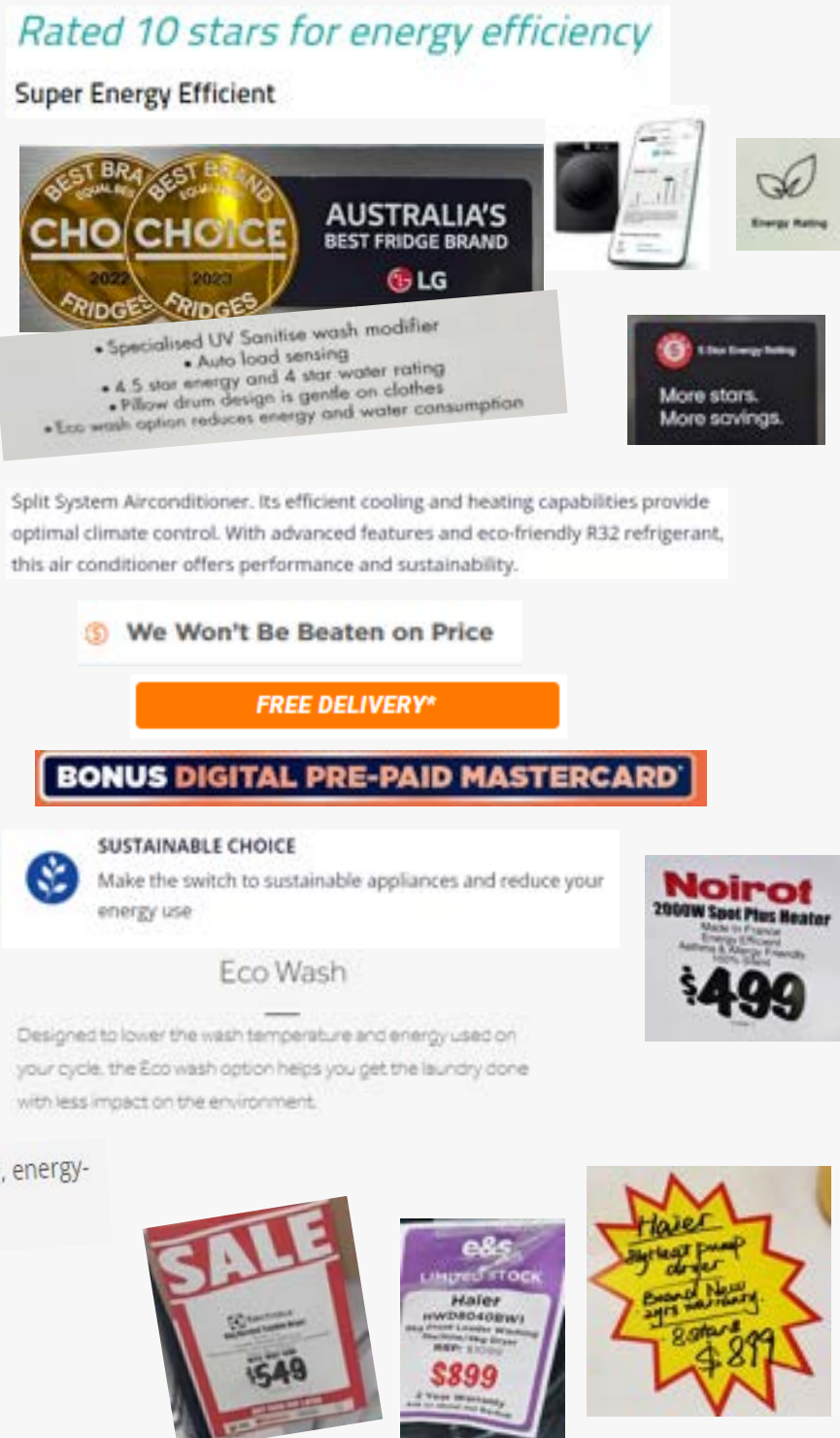
- Large national stores
- Online marketplaces

LARGE NATIONAL STORES TENDED TO HAVE MORE MARKETING ON DISPLAY COMPARED TO SMALL INDEPENDENT STORES. ONLINE MARKETPLACES WERE OVERLOADED WITH INFORMATION.

Large national: Harvey Norman / JB Hi-Fi / Good Guys / Appliances Online



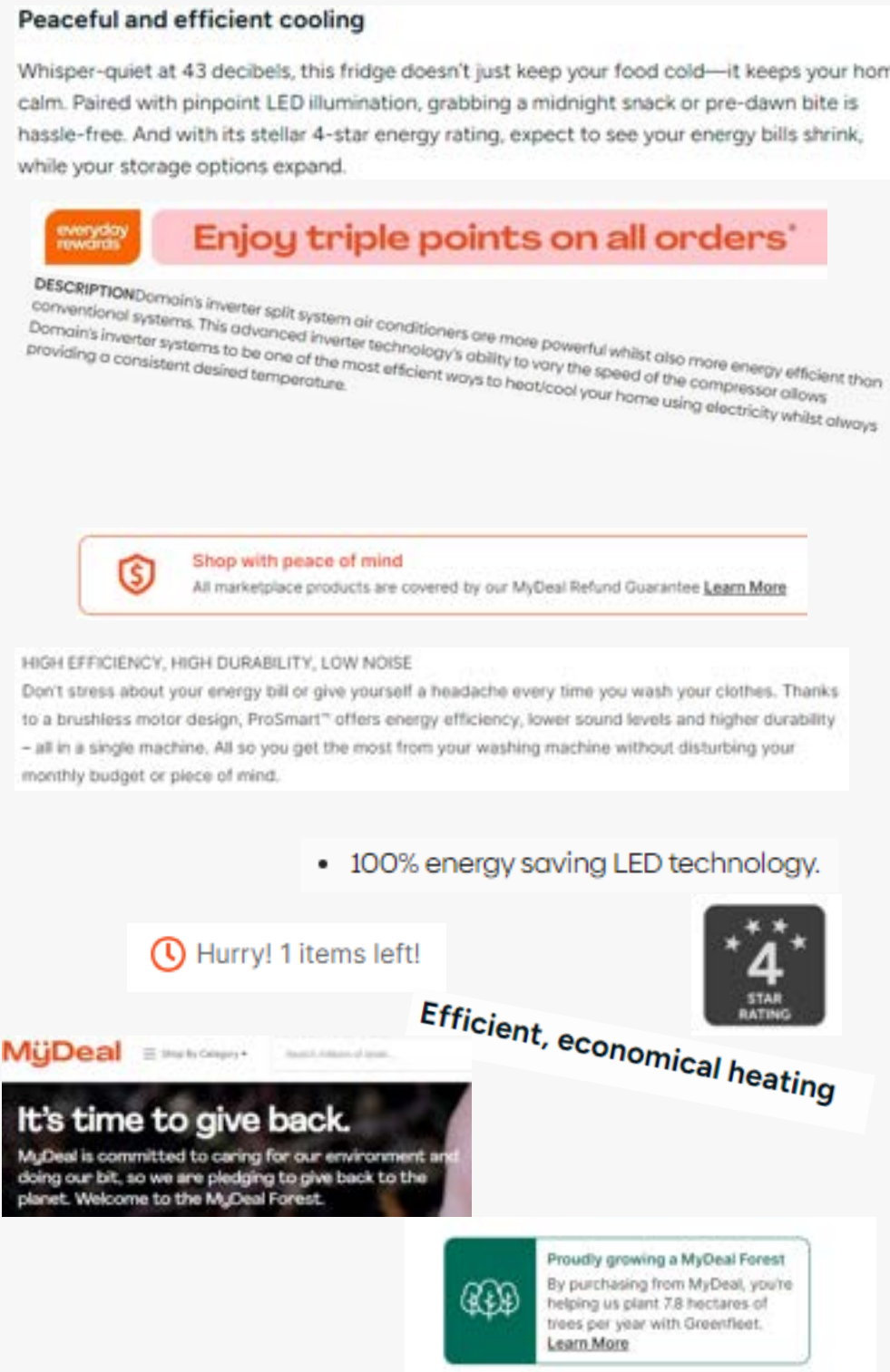
Mid tier state specific: Bing Lee, Betta Home Living, Bi-Rite, Retravision, Best Buy, e&s



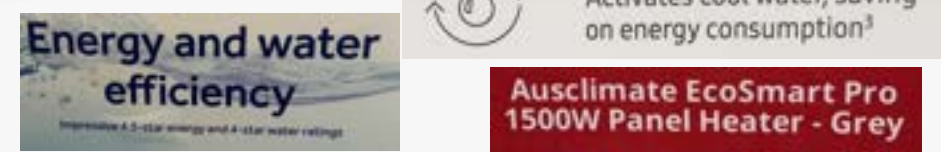
Small independent: Electrical Whitegoods Centre, Brisbane Whitegoods Factory Outlet, Sunnybank Hi-Fi, Smart Electrical Clearance Outlet



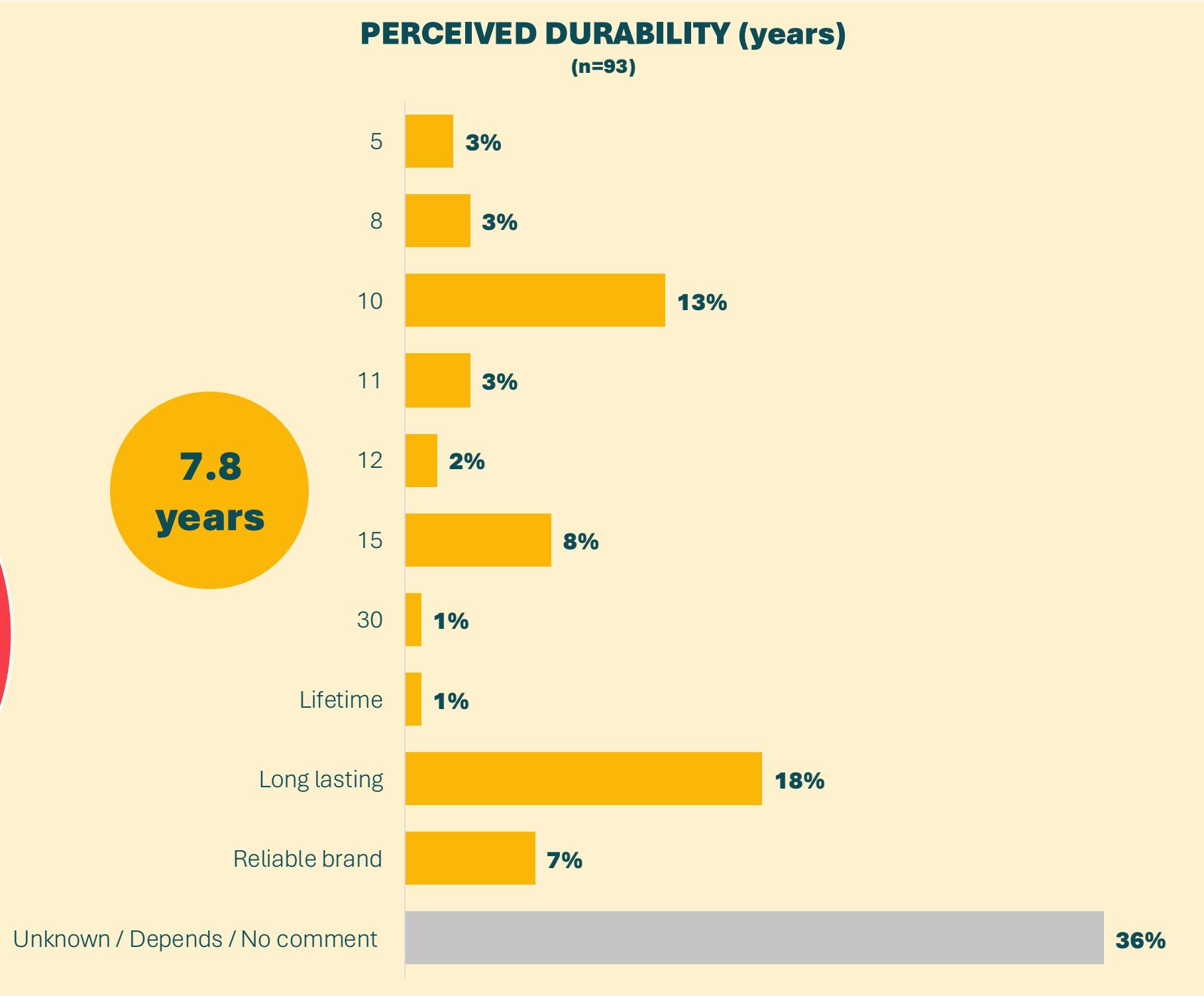
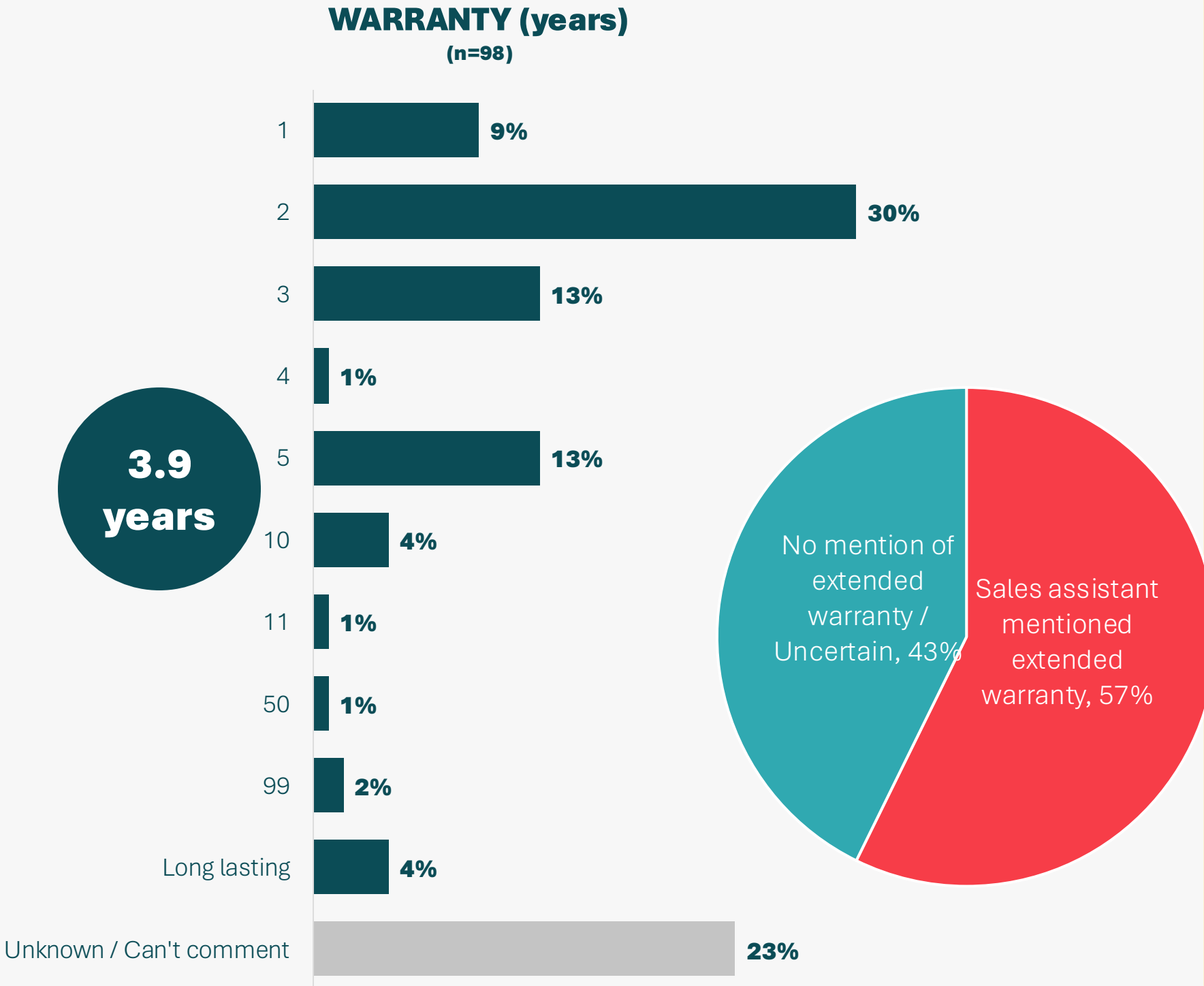
Online marketplaces: Kogan, MyDeal, Catch of the Day



the Whirlpool 313 litre Bottom Mount Fridge is the perfect choice for those seeking a reliable, energy-efficient and stylish refrigerator.



WHEN ASKED HOW LONG THE APPLIANCE SHOULD LAST, MORE THAN HALF OF THE SALES ASSISTANTS MENTIONED AN EXTENDED WARRANTY.



“They said the fridge should last much more than the warranty. They said Hisense was a reputable brand from China and they made good quality fridges.”

“Tim advised that both were of long-lasting quality and that they were reliable brands.”



WHAT'S NEXT?

STAGE B. QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION GROUPS

8 focus groups with consumers in Adelaide, Melbourne, Newcastle and Cairns to unpack purchase behaviours and responses to mystery shop materials collected.

STAGE C. QUANTITATIVE DISCRETE CHOICE EXPERIMENT

Deriving importance of purchase decision criteria and information among N=1,500 Australians.

REPORT RELEASE & WEBINAR

Mid 2025



VISIT US

Level 6,
179 Queen Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Australia

CONTACT US

+61 3 9607 7101
office@cprc.org.au
www.cprc.org.au

